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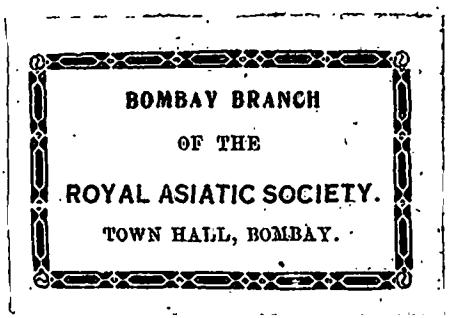

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MISCELLANIES

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BY

CHARLES KINGSLEY,

RECTOR OF EVERSLEY;

CHAPLAIN IN ORDINARY TO HER MAJESTY.

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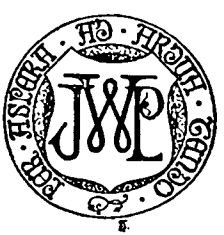

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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MISCELLANIES.

MANSFIELD'S PARAGUAY, BRAZIL, AND THE PLATE.*

THE 'over-population' theory, so popular at the beginning of this century, has been fast falling into disrepute. That startling dogma of the science du néant which used of old so magisterially to inform the human race that it was on the whole a failure, because 'the number of human beings had always a tendency to increase faster than the means of subsistence,' is now becoming, not merely questionable, but ludicrous. Started, so wicked wags affirm, by a few old bachelors, who, having no children themselves, bore a grudge against their 'recklessly-multiplying' neighbours for having any—it was suspected from the first on moral grounds; and may be now considered as fairly abolished on scientific ones. The moral philosopher answered to it, that it was impossible that the universe could be one grand mistake: human nature a disease; and the Creator of mankind one who——but reverence forbids us to say what we should have a right to say of Him, were that theory a true one. The student of humanity asked, 'Is it possible that the family life, which is the

* Fraser's Magazine, November, 1856.—'Paraguay, Brazil, and the Plate.' Letters written in 1852-3. By C. B. Mansfield, Esq., M.A., of Clare Hall, Cambridge; with a Sketch of the Author's Life, by the Rev. C. Kingsley. Cambridge: Macmillan and Co. 1856.

appointed method of educating the highest and holiest feelings of man, should be at the same time the normal cause of his final poverty and starvation? Leave such inhuman dreams to monks and faquirs.' The scientific agriculturist doubted the truth of the dogma more and more as his science revealed to him that the limit of productiveness, even upon old soils, had been nowhere reached. The sanitary reformer put in as a demurrer the important fact, that under proper arrangements that limit could never be reached; for as each human being (so he asserted) returned to the soil the whole elements of the food which he consumed, saving those which already existed in boundless abundance in the atmosphere, the productiveness of the soil ought to increase in exact ratio to the number of human beings concentrated on it. From these broad facts, the advocates of the science du néant took refuge in arguments about the cost of production. More skilful farming, more complete sewage, might certainly enable the land to support greater numbers; but not to do so profitably. The increased expense of the processes would interfere with the general rapid production of wealth. Here perhaps they had, on the whole, the best of the argument; and if it were any pleasure to them to prove the impotency of humanity, they must have enjoyed that lofty gratification awhile. One would have thought, certainly, that the business of the philosopher who desired the good of his fellow-creatures, was rather to show them what they could do, than what they could not; to preach progress, rather than the stationary state, and hope, rather than despair; to bend his mind, like a practical man, to the ascertaining by experiment what could be done towards increasing the sustenance of the peoples, instead of sending forth from his remote study, idola specûs, abstract maxims which only strengthened

the dogged laziness which refused to till the land, and the dogged ignorance which refused either to use or let others use the refuse of the towns, though it was poisoning hundreds yearly by epidemics. But the science du néant took little account of such plain matters; after all, why help to support more human beings, when it had settled long ago that there were too many already? Why even stop epidemics, which might be only nature's wholesome method of ridding herself of that plethora of rational beings—'Children of God'—as some still called them—with which she was periodically embarrassed. So the agriculturist and the sanitary reformer had to fight on, and on the whole, conquer, with little or no help from that science which arrogated to itself the knowledge of the laws of wealth.

Meanwhile stood by, laughing bitterly enough, the really practical men,—such men as the author of the book now before us: the travellers, the geographers, the experimental men of science, who took the trouble, before deciding on what could be, to find out what was; and, as it were, 'took stock' of the earth and her capabilities, before dogmatizing on the future fate of her inhabitants. And, 'What?' they asked in blank astonishment, 'what, in the name of maps and common sense, means this loud squabble? What right has any one to dogmatize on the future of humanity, while the far greater part of the globe is yet unredeemed from the wild beast and the wild hunter? If scientific agriculture be too costly, is there not room enough on the earth for as much unscientific and cheap tillage as would support many times over her present population? What matters it, save as a question of temporary makeshift, whether England can be made to give thirty-three bushels of wheat per acre instead of thirty-one, by some questionably-remunerative outlay of capital, while the

Texan squatter, without any capital save his own two hands, is growing eighty bushels an acre? Your disquisitions about the 'margin of productiveness' are interesting, curious, probably correct: valuable in old countries: but nowhere else. For is the question, whether men shall live, or even be born at all, to be settled by them, forsooth, while the valley of the Ottawa can grow corn enough to supply all England; the valley of the Mississippi for all Europe; while Australia is a forest, instead of being, as it will be one day, the vineyard of the world; while New Zealand and the Falklands are still waste; and Polynesia, which may become the Greece of the New World, is worse than waste; while the Nebraska alone is capable of supporting a population equal to France and Spain together; while, in the Old World, Asia Minor, once the garden of old Rome, lies a desert in the foul and lazy hands of the Ottoman; while the Tropics produce almost spontaneously a hundred valuable articles of food, all but overlooked as yet in the exclusive cultivation of cotton and sugar;—and finally (asks Mr. Mansfield in his book), while South America alone contains a territory of some eight hundred miles square, at least equalling Egypt in climate, and surpassing England in fertility; easy of access; provided, by means of its great rivers, with unrivalled natural means of communication, 'with water power enough to turn all the mills in the world;' and needing nothing but men to make it one of the gardens of the world?

With his mind full of such a hope for the future of humanity, and full, too, of scientific knowledge which gave him especial fitness for estimating the capabilities of a foreign country, Mr. Mansfield went out upon a tour, the only fruit of which is the present book.

He did not live either to form the book into shape,

or to carry out the plans at which he hints therein. A premature and most tragic death overtook him in the midst of his scientific labours, and the mass of papers which he left behind passed into the hands of his friends, who are now digesting and arranging them, with a view to publication. These letters, carefully edited, and illustrated by notes and appendices, by an intimate friend of his, have been chosen as the firstfruits of his genius, as being at once the most popular work which he has left, and the one, perhaps, which most illustrates the variety, fulness, and energy of his intellect. A short sketch of his life, by me, has been appended by our mutual friend the editor to his preface: but the best evidence of what manner of man he was, is to be found in the letters themselves.

They are nothing more than letters, though worthy of a man of single heart and open eye; and so complete and full in themselves that the editor must have found little difficulty in forming them into an organic whole. With a reverence for the dead, which will be at once understood and honoured, he has refrained, perhaps here and there too scrupulously, from altering a single word of the documents as he found them, respecting even certain scraps of Cambridge and Winchester slang, which may possibly offend that class of readers who fancy that the sign of magnanimity is to take everything au grand sérieux, and that the world's work must needs be done upon stilts: but which will be, perhaps, to the more thoughtful reader only additional notes of power, of that true 'English Lebensglückseligkeit,' as the German calls it, which makes a jest of danger, and an amusement of toil. Jean Paul makes somewhere the startling assertion, that no man really believes his religious creed unless he can afford to jest about it. Without going so far as that, I will

say boldly, that no man feels himself master of his work, unless he can afford to jest about it; and that a frolicsome habit of mind is rather a token of deep, genial, and superabundant vitality, than of a shallow and narrow nature, which can only be earnest and attentive by conscious and serious efforts.

However, the best apology for the form in which this book appears is to be found in the editor's own words.

Let none forget that this work is a posthumous one; put together out of letters written with all the careless familiarity of one who is addressing his nearest kindred, and his most intimate friends,—'Materials homespun for home use,' to quote some happy words respecting them. Had the writer lived to shape out these materials, who knows how much he might have suppressed,* how much added, how much re-written? Those only who have had in hand his graver works (such as that on the 'Constitution of Salts,' now in the press) can tell with what scrupulous, almost painful, care he was wont to elaborate the finished expression of his thoughts.

And the task of editing a posthumous work, unchosen moreover by the dead, differs greatly from that of the chosen editor of a work by a living writer. The latter stands on the author's own footing, and may well deem himself bound to alter or omit whatever might be excepted to. The former should rather seek to preserve all that is capable of being defended; all that the writer might really have wished outspoken. What might have been his last word we know not. We only know that this was his first; and most especially is one called on to be diffident in altering the writings of one like Charles Mansfield, in whom so many rare and loveable gifts were so strangely blended, that though one may meet his equal, none who knew him will ever expect to meet in this world his like.

This is sound argument, and (save in the case which I have mentioned in a note) I fully concur in it; and take gladly (since it is impossible now to have

* This should especially apply to a hasty jest or two about an author to whom both history and geological science, as far as South America is concerned, are most deeply indebted. Had either Mr. Mansfield or his gifted editor ever become acquainted with that personage, and come under the influence of his geniality, courtesy, and learning, they would have long ago erased expressions which, though uttered merely in joke, should never have been uttered at all.

more) this fragmentary relic of the observations of a true genius, upon countries too rarely visited by men of science or insight.

From Mr. Mansfield's first landing in the Tropics (one might say from his first sight of Lisbon) the fact which seems to have weighed upon his mind was that of waste; palpable, inexcusable, boundless waste; waste springing from idleness and ignorance, and punished by poverty and disease. Can one wonder if the cholera should sweep away thousands in Lisbon, while 'dead dogs' are lying about the narrow streets: or if the population there should increase faster than the means of subsistence, while live 'dogs are asleep in the middle of the streets anywhere—a striking symptom of the inactivity and lifelessness of the town?'

So, too, at Pernambuco. Can one wonder at the recurrence of yellow fever, while 'there is not a drain of any sort, and all imaginable filth lies in the streets;' or that the resources of the country should be altogether undeveloped, while the roads (of one of which Mr. Mansfield gives a sketch) are deep ditches, 'from which a rider can just see, perhaps, over the top of the road,' worked out by the feet of the pack-horses into transverse ridges and furrows of stiff clay, or mud and water, in which many a horse has been abandoned as inextricable? While roads are left in this state, with a boundless supply of timber close at hand (supposing that stone be too far off) to make a sound 'metal,' who can tell anything of the real resources of the country? Who can tell how much its population might or might not be profitably increased? Mr. Mansfield's opinion seems to be that its capabilities are boundless. 'What a paradise is, or at least might be, this country, if it were possessed by the English! I do not feel at all sure that I am not dead, and have

not recommenced another life. I should be pretty certain that I was not in the earth world, but in some other planet, if I had had a sound sleep lately to cut the thread of consciousness.' And again: 'What a contrast here!' (compared with St. Vincent's, in the Cape Verd Islands). 'This place is, even in the hands of these wretched undeveloped people, an Eden of beauty. What a Paradise it would be made by Englishmen of this century! What a heaven it will be made by the brother-men of the age that is to come! I need not pour out my rapturous admiration of the works of the Great Poet-Father, as you have seen such and have worshipped in similar scenes. The beauty is almost bewildering. The glorious cocoa-nut trees, bananas, palms, bread-fruit, and the magnificent green oranges. . . . . I am too giddy to write soberly about anything. I feel inclined to cut capers under the trees, till I am tired, then sigh like a hippopotamus for some one to pour it all out upon, and then lie down and dream. As for studying the botany of the country, it is impossible. Nothing is possible but to photographize everybody and everything: caméras cannot get giddy with wonder.'

There is a practical element underlying these raptures, merely æsthetic as they may seem at first sight; and Mr. Mansfield notes a most practical want when he says (as all do who know much of the Tropics):—

I suppose there is scarcely any one here who values the glorious imagery of the Mighty Poet who made all this. Negroes, Mulattoes, Portuguese, Brazilians, have all pigs' eyes, by virtue, I suppose, of Adam's fall; and the English, for the same reason, are all absorbed in the pursuit of wealth, and so cannot enjoy.

Most practically does this carelessness about the glory which surrounds them affect Tropic civilization—we had almost said, render it impossible. For without the appreciation of beauty, there can be no art;

without art, there can be none of that highest civilization among the rich, which will gradually draw up to its own level, humanizing and educating the classes below. 'Tropic art' is a thing which the world has yet to see: but when the inspiration shall come, how poor and cold will be all our northern conceptions by the side of the Raphaels and Turners of the New World! That a 'Tropic Art' will be developed some day, seems to us a promise written in the book of destiny; for surely, sooner or later, men's minds will be awakened, and more are intended by heaven to be awakened, to see (and as a necessary consequence to reproduce) the beautiful, in those regions of the world in which the beautiful is to be found in utterly unparalleled luxuriance.

In the Tropics, if anywhere, must the old saw about 'ingenuas didicisse artes' stand true; for there, more than anywhere else, the uneducated mind, in the long intervals of repose which the fertility of the soil allows, is tempted to expend itself in those fierce and sensual indulgences, which have plunged the Spanish colonies first into profligacy and then into bloodshed. Nowhere so much as in the Tropics do men require, in order to any self-development, even to any social order and safety of life and property, to be raised above the slavery of their animal appetites; and a free white nation which should have learnt this truth; which should be really educated to understand and enjoy the great glory of God around them, might rise to a civilization such as the world has never yet seen, for gracefulness and comfort, scientific appliances and the means of intellectual repose alternating with wholesome but not excessive toil; a civilization beside which that of old Sybaris or Agrigentum would be coarse and poor, and which, meanwhile, need never, under moderately

just laws, exhibit any of those fearful contrasts of wealth and poverty which are the blot on our European States; because (as now with the free West Indian negro) every physical comfort, almost every physical luxury, would be within the reach of any one who was willing to labour daily just long enough to keep his body in health. The ideal of what a tropical white nation might be, when properly acclimatized (and acclimatization is now perfectly easy to the decently sober and prudent man), is, if we will but let our imagination soberly work out the details, too dazzling to be dwelt on long without pain, beside the fearful contrast which the social state of Europe presents to it at this moment, and is likely to present for many a year to come.

We will pass on to Mr. Mansfield's experiences of Buenos Ayres, and the country about the River Plate, learning always the same sad lesson of boundless waste, neglect, and incapacity:—

> I need not tell you that all the land almost, between the Andes and the Paraná-Paraguay, is one vast plain; all the southern part of which, almost, is now sacrificed to that lowest and most degraded form of occupation, that sham of industry, the feeding and butchering of cattle,—a vile occupation, delighted in by master capitalists, because it yields them a return on their money with the employment of the smallest possible number of workmen,—delighted in by workmen, because their employment is a lazy one, which excites none of their faculties, except those necessary to enable them to sit on horseback, and to rip the hides off half-killed oxen. I should like some of your lovers of flesh to see the reeking horrors of the saladeros of the River Plate.

I have no sympathy with the author's vegetarian predilections: but putting them aside, the facts which he gives prove a waste of animal food, and of animal matter valuable in other ways, frightful to contemplate:—

> Dead horses and oxen everywhere . . . the immense quantity of bones is quite wonderful; they are, I am told, used as fuel by the

poorer people for cooking and heating ovens. The road is repaired by filling up the holes with them, and in some places you see hedges made of them. I have seen one or two corrals (cattle-pounds) surrounded by fences made entirely of the bones which form the cores of the horns of oxen. . . . Besides the waste of land (which might grow corn), the cruelty and the disgusting scenes which all this implies, I am annoyed by the consideration of the enormous waste of animal matter, which putrefies in the open air, and which might all make ammonia or saltpètre.

Large quantities of these bones, it should be said, are now imported into Europe as manure; but what a double 'Laputism' is involved in the facts! An industrial system so out of gear, that we find it actually cheaper or at least easier, (and this in spite of our unrivalled mechanical appliances,) to transport bone manure across the Atlantic, than far more valuable town manure a couple of miles! Tens of thousands here glad enough of sheep's trotters or tripe once a week; good beef in tons putrefying there. It is sad and ludicrous enough: the one comfort is, that the laws of supply and demand are not asleep, though man may be; and that little is wanting on our part, save increased information, to tell the masses who demand in vain, where the supply is; and increased education, to give them the courage and self-help whereby they may avail themselves of nature's infinite bounty. Let us teach on, and have patience. If the meat cannot go to Europe, then Europe will go to the meat; and where the carcase is, nobler animals than eagles be gathered together.

Already Mr. Mansfield saw the promise, here and there, of a better state of things. Here and there an Englishman or a Frenchman tries agriculture, and succeeds at once. What else could be expected?

Fancy (says Mr. Mansfield) the capabilities of these lands, where they plant woods of peach-trees for fire-wood and to feed their pigs —not because the fruit is not first-rate, but because there are not men enough to eat it. Olives, too, grow in great perfection at

Buenos Ayres, and the vine luxuriates in the upper provinces Mendoza and Tucuman. Here is a land of corn, oil, and wine; and as for the honey, as if it was not enough that there should be a score of sorts of bees to make it, the very wasps brew delicious honey. The Banda Oriental and Entre Rios have the same capabilities as the plain of the West, with such other advantages as are given by a more undulating and broken ground, with a great deal of mineral wealth. Further north, in Corrientes and Paraguay, you have the semi-tropical and tropical climates, where the richest oranges, sugar, coffee, tea, yerba maté ('Paraguay tea'), silk, and all the glories of a sun-blest vegetation, are to be had for the asking. Then as for intercommunication. In those parts where the country is hilly there is the best water-carriage in the world; and over the plains, what a country for railways! The whole Pampas ought to be furrowed with tram-roads (not to speak of steam locomotives, which they do not want yet): here is an employment for the thousands of horses which are to be had and fed for nothing. The glorious timber of Paraguay (there is in Appendix D a list of some thirty species of useful timber, by W. G. Ousely, Esq.) will do for the trams. Iron is not needed.

Paraguay itself is, he thinks, to be one of the great timber-markets of the world.

The obstacle to exporting timber from Brazil is the difficulty of getting it to the coast: here, however, is the Paraguay-Paraná ready to float down the timber from the interior.

This suggestion Mr. Mansfield follows up by a very bold and original one, which, we hear, is about to be adopted in practice. Why should not the timber be floated bodily across the Atlantic in rafts, as it is down the German rivers, only towed by steam? Of course, to do it safely, and to make it pay, it must be done on a large scale: the trans-oceanic raft must be a great island of timber, which will defy the storms by its very size.

I have no doubt (continues Mr. Mansfield, with one of those flashes of scientific imagination with which this book abounds) that the next generation, instead of loading ships with Wenham Lake ice-blocks, will tow icebergs from the Pole to the Equator. . . .

These rivers do not want steam to navigate them. Glorious water-gods, they are of extra size, on purpose to do all the work themselves. I wonder why rivers have never been made to do their own tug-work.

And then he proceeds to sketch plans for stationary water-wheels which shall tow craft up the stream, and for floating factories to which those on the Rhine below Mannheim shall be 'baby-toys.'

The power available on this Paraná is positively unlimited; human hands need do no labour within hundreds of miles of its banks. Oh, what an enormous reservoir of force utterly wasted! Verily the exuberant bounty of God is awful, and the idleness of man is ghastly.

Whether each and every one of what Mr. Mansfield calls his 'dynamical dreams about this huge deluge in harness' be mechanically possible, is little concern of ours. Probably they are; for he was a scientific mechanician of no common order. But let the details go for what they are worth; the idea, the spirit which underlies them, is still invaluable. Surely this is the truly practical, the truly philosophic method of looking at man and nature, to look at them in hope and in faith; not to call upon humanity to fold its hands in the stationary state, in the very years in which it is discovering means of progress unparalleled in any age, and to abnegate its own powers just as it becomes conscious of them.

By a series of small good fortunes, Mr. Mansfield found himself in November, 1852, in Paraguay itself; almost the first Englishman who had entered it for many years. The sight of fresh, vast capabilities, not merely in the soil and climate, but in the people themselves, excited in him lofty hopes, which alas! were brought to a sudden end by his untimely death; and the colonization of Paraguay, his darling scheme, must now be the work of another brain than his. That this colonization must take place, sooner or later, it is hard to doubt: and indeed the recent movement of sending thither French emigrants is the first step of a great movement to which we can wish no better for-

tune than that it may be guided, or at least assisted, by such a mind as has left in this book fragmentary tokens of its own power, earnestness, and chivalrous self-devotion to the public weal. The district which most excited Mr. Mansfield's hopes, however, was not Paraguay itself, but the 'Gran Chaco,' that vast tract which lies to the north of the river Paraguay, in length from Santa Fé ten degrees of latitude northward, and six degrees of longitude in breadth—a splendid country possessed by wild Indians alone, in which the simple and indolent Paraguayans (though it is separated from them only by the river) literally dare not set foot, for fear (forsooth) of Indians whom the Jesuit missionaries, though they did not convert them, visited safely from end to end of the land.

It is just known that the rivers are or may easily be made navigable, and the rich verdure of the country is visible from the top of this house; and that is all that is known about it. . . . The country still is open. The only positive right which the neighbouring republics claim with respect to it, is that which they have doubtless in common with the rest of the world, that each may extend its frontier so far as it can into the Chaco, by encroachment of actual occupation. But not being able to do this, they add the negative dog-manger claim of refusing to other people the right to do the same.

However, two years after this letter was written, a nucleus of civilization, it seems, began to be formed in this neglected place; a Bordeaux company having obtained a grant of land opposite Assuncion, which they are to colonize with a thousand families,—Irish, French, and Spanish (the latter two, Mr. Mansfield supposes, will be Basques.)

This latter supposition springs from the fact, that so great has been the Basque emigration to Monte Video of late, that some years ago there were whole villages in which nothing but Basque was spoken. Meanwhile the omnipresent Irishman has found his way

thither also, and is mingling with the Iberian races: so that, curiously enough (as the Editor remarks in a note), we may witness the formation in the New World of a second people of 'Celt-Iberi.' May they prosper! and with them, any and every colony who will go forth, to replenish the earth and subdue it.

A portion of our Italian legion has also, I understand, gone out as colonists to Paraguay. I have unfortunately not been able to obtain any details on the subject; but the plan seems one which must, with common prudence, be crowned with success; and this band of disciplined and enterprising men, if well supported by European influence, should surely form a nucleus of strength, which may be hereafter of boundless importance in the fast-coming era of general European emigration.

I should gladly enter at greater length into the question of the probable future of this magnificent country, did I not fear that by so doing I might give a somewhat wrong impression of Mr. Mansfield's book as a whole, and make many readers fancy it fitted rather for the merchant and the projector, than the general reader. But, in fact, it is throughout an amusing book, consisting not merely of scientific or industrial hints, but of the impressions of the moment about every conceivable matter, dashed off with a careless, but a graceful pen. Mr. Mansfield's extraordinary variety of information made him as good a traveller on paper, as his bodily activity, temperance, and unfailing energy and good humour, made him one in body; and the book throughout is full of nervous sketches, picturesque and humorous, even when he is talking of birds and flowers. He has, especially, that accurate, and truly poetic eye, which never fails to supply him with the exact simile or epi-

thet for each object. One can hardly open a page, without finding a bit of description instinct with originality and life. The sea, in those latitudes, is so calm that

'A petrel, flying three or four hundred yards from the ship, was quite plainly seen reflected in the water. . . . A day in a tropical calm is a wonderful dreamy bit of life; and at the end of it, the sun drops hard and bright behind the clean sharp horizon, as if it were eclipsed by the edge of a knife; the fringe of clouds seeming to rise like solid rocks out of the water.' . . . 'Every one has heard of the 'Thresher,' who beats the sperm-whale to death with his tail; but we never had any notion what his redoubtable weapon was like, till we read of it as 'a huge ivory paper-knife, sabre-shaped, ten feet long, perfectly white, which was occasionally protruded perpendicularly out of the water, and then brought down with a tremendous thrash.'' . . . 'The ants walk up the trees and cut off the leaves; other ants remaining below, receive them, cut them into small pieces, shoulder them, and carry them to their nest. There was a long line of these fellows walking at double-quick pace, each with a great piece of green leaf towering over their heads, just like Birnam wood coming to Dunsinane.' . . . 'The frogs, some work on an anvil, like blacksmiths, others whistle like a man calling a dog, others bark like a dog.'

His sketches of tropical scenery are admirable; better than those in Mr. Gosse's 'Jamaica' (excellent as they are), and only requiring that polish which cannot be expected in familiar letters, to make them equal to Michael Scott's as yet unrivalled pictures, so well known in 'Tom Cringle and the Cruise of the Midge.' Take, again, a sketch of a humming-bird

'Covered with iridescent green. . . . You sometimes see one, as you think, sitting on a twig; when you get a little nearer, you see that there is no twig; he is sitting on the air quite stationary, while his wings are vibrating like microscopic steam engines; his beak is probing some flower on a bunch. Then he gives a little jerk with his tail, and his position is shifted half-an-inch to the next flower.'

. . . He sees, at Buenos Ayres, a curious leafless tree, called Umbu, which looks 'just like the roots of some big tree, pulled bodily out of the earth and stuck up on end,* the trunk looking like an old stubbed oak, but

* I must express my regret that to so many of the natural objects which Mr. Mansfield describes, the scientific names (by which alone they can be identified) have not been appended.

soft as cork or cabbage; you might cut down one a yard thick with a penknife.' He sees a sandy cliff on the Paraná full of bird-burrows, which prove to be those of parrots—'long-tailed creatures, green and grey, with a flight like a cuckoo, and a scream like a jackdaw.' A swarm of locusts overhead 'did not darken the sun the least: but as their wings glittered in the light, they looked like flakes of snow passing over the blue sky.' The flowers which cover the leafless Lapacho trees 'look, at some distance, like immense roses stuck on a bed of moss.' A kind of wild pine-apple in flower has, in the centre of the crown of green leaves, an inner horizontal coronet of bright scarlet, 'forming a cup of fire, in the midst of which sits the flower-clump of little white blossoms, stuffed in a cushion. It ought to be called the phœnix-plant; it is just like the portraits you see of that bird grilling.'

But perhaps the best sketch in the book is that of his first sight of the great 'Mycteria Americana'—p. 280:

As I was riding this evening across the Pantanos (marshes), a district on the south side of the town, where the soil is clay, and the surface covered with little shallow pools of water, with pretty water-plants and quantities of wading birds, I saw the most magnificent bird I ever beheld; he must be the king that was sent down from Heaven to meet the demands of the frogs,—a perfect emperor of cranes. I had just been watching a big heron, when I caught sight of this fellow. At first I thought he was a cow, and then that he was a man; at last I perceived that his gait was far too stately for any biped but a bird; and he let me come as close to him as about the length of an ordinary room; and he was all snow white, except his beak and his head and his neck, which were black, and a broad collar round the lower part of his neck, between the black and white, which was deep red; and his beak was ponderous, like unto a pelican's, and full a foot long, with a heavy lower jaw. He must have stood five feet high without his boots; and he let me look at him ever so long, and he stalked about quite promiscuous; and there was close to him a big white heron, that looked quite small; and as I stood and wondered, he spread his wings, all snow-white, and sailed straight away down south for miles and miles, till the speck of white in the sky was too small to see.

Very interesting also, especially at the present time, are Mr. Mansfield's scattered hints as to the qualities of the Paraguayans themselves. He looks on them as a race who have done what work they could do; and who, having had a chance of organizing and colonizing a magnificent country, and having failed from indolence, are destined to be absorbed by the Anglo-Norman race, whether English or American. And this expectation of his receives, to our notions, a sad corroboration from the 'extreme laxity, or rather almost total absence, of morality among the women'—sure sign of a decaying race. Nevertheless, it is worth while to note the many fine capabilities of a race which may hereafter mingle itself with Anglo-Norman blood. Their parentage is curious enough. The early Spanish conquistadores, who settled Paraguay in the middle of the sixteenth century, all took Guarani (Indian wives); and thus sprang up a mixed race, speaking the Guarani language, whom an old Spanish writer in 1612 describes as—

> Commonly good soldiers, and of great valour; inclined to war, skilful in the management of all sorts of arms; excellent riders, so that there is none among them who cannot break in a colt; above all, very loyal and obedient servants to his Majesty. The women are generally of noble and honourable sentiments, virtuous and beautiful, endowed with discretion, industrious, and well skilled in all kinds of needlework, in which they are continually engaged.

In 1852, Mr. Mansfield found the upper classes—who look down upon their native Guarani, and affect the official Spanish and the estilo de abayo,—the style of below, i.e., the quasi-European fashions of the colonies at the mouth of the river—wearing a somewhat used-up look; as is to be expected in a nation which has lived for now three hundred years utterly isolated from the rest of the world: but of a charming simplicity, quietly enjoying life in poverty and ignorance; the ladies barely able to read and write, and asking

whether people went by land or by water to the United States; but the peasantry, who still speak Guarani, very noble, and with so little appearance of Indian or negro blood, that he sees in poor cottages in the country numerous children whom he would have supposed the offspring of some high-bred English family, with delicately-cut features, rather long than broad, and hair as fine as any Saxon; among many of them, reddish hair, quite Scotch. This fact, and the general 'English complexion' of the people, drives him to the conclusion that among the Spanish conquistadores there was a singular absence of Moorish blood, and that the country was settled by pure northern Vandals. Be that as it may, such a people, stately and yet energetic, good-tempered and high-minded, docile and imitative as he describes them, need only to be freed from the stupid tyranny which has for the last few years ground them down, and to be thrown into the great common current of human progress, to develop, though not perhaps independent and alone, into something more worthy of that terrestrial Paradise in which Mr. Mansfield found them idling —the western 'Land of Prester John,' as he calls it, in a playful and fanciful poem (full, meanwhile, of deep and noble feeling) inserted in this volume—another proof of the powers of that many-sided mind, of which English science has been (for some inscrutable yet, we doubt not, merciful purpose) so untimely bereft.

Meanwhile, there is something sad in the child-like ignorance and frivolity of the dwellers in the Arcadia of the West. Take, for instance, their way of celebrating Christmas-day—p. 390:

In several of the houses of the better class of the poorer sort, they rig up what they call a pesebre, which is, being interpreted, a manger. No doubt it was originally meant as a representation of the birth of our Lord: but it would seem that this meaning of it

is quite lost. . . . Under a bower of calico and lace . . . are seated every kind of little figure that can be collected: the centre of the background is occupied by a doll which represents the Virgin, and all around are the stupid little figures, which look as if they were gleaned from the toy-shop of some remote country village in England. There were grotesque little images of Oliver Cromwell and Robin Hood, with an apostle or two, and little dogs mounted on squeaking bellows, with little patches of live grass dotted about among them, and candles to illuminate. The visitors' room is crowded with spectators . . . who sit and gaze in admiration on the motionless spectacle, and every now and then break out into a melancholy chant, which I suppose is meant for some act of reverence. If this was seen in a newly-discovered country, I suppose it would be set down as the worshipping of their idols.

What else it can be set down as now, is difficult to define. Certainly, setting this and similar facts by the side of miraculous images and winking pictures, and cures by relics, we know no facts recorded of any ancient idolatry more grossly sensuous than those of the modern Romish and Greek churches. All attempts to draw any distinctions between the heathen and the quasi-Christian creed on these points have, it is to be feared, failed utterly; and every excuse or explanation now offered by modern priests for the abomination, has been offered long ago by those of Greece, Egypt, and Rome, and by their Neo-platonist partisans.

The spectators (continues Mr. Mansfield) consist chiefly of Chinás, or women of the lower order: but the ladies of the higher families go about to see them as an amusement; and not, I fancy, without much gratification.

Couple this with the frightful fact that at the expulsion of the Jesuits from Paraguay, the Indians of their boasted Reductions relapsed at once into barbarism and heathendom, proving thus the utter absence of any self-supporting vitality,—any real 'regeneration unto life'—in the Jesuit system; and all we can say of Popery, which daily boasts of its fresh conquests and approaching triumphs, is, that in the very country in which its power has been most unlimited, and least disturbed by external

enemies, 'that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away.'

Paraguay is, as might be supposed, the paradise of smokers. Every one smokes—even at a lady's funeral (where a mulatto-man chants through his nose the whole Latin service, in nothing but a shirt and drawers, with a green-baize poncho, and much spitting on the pavement; Mr. Mansfield 'never saw such a scoundrelly-looking set of fellows as the priests who officiated,') and the chief mourner prepares for the procession by sticking a cigar in his mouth. 'Even the young ladies 'of the upper dozen,' who refrain in public, smoke vigorously when alone, at all hours and places; and the tobacco is scarcely, if at all, inferior to that of Havannah.'

Picturesque, lazy, cheerful people they seem—content enough with 'the stationary state' in a country where the necessaries of life may be had for the asking, and quite unaware (and small blame to them) that to remain in the stationary state, in the midst of such a country, while all the nations round them are struggling for the means of existence, is a national sin, because a national selfishness—a burying in the earth the talent allotted to them. For surely a moral duty lies on any nation, who can produce far more than sufficient for its own wants, to supply the wants of others from its own surplus. No one, of course, is Quixotic enough to expect a people to condemn itself to unnecessary labour for mere generosity's sake, and to give away what they might sell: but the human species has a right to demand (what the Maker thereof demands also, and enforces the demand by very fearful methods), that each people should either develop the capabilities of their own country, or make room for those who will develop them. If they accept that duty, they have their reward in the

renovation of blood, which commerce, and its companion, colonization, are certain to bring; and in increased knowledge, which involves increased comfort, and increased means of supporting population. If they refuse it, they punish themselves by their own act. They discover (or rather the world discovers by their example) that national isolation is only national degradation; that the stationary state exists only on paper, and is, in practice and fact, a state of steady deterioration, physical and moral; that to refuse to take their place in the commonweal of humanity, and their share of the burdens of humanity, is to cut themselves off from all that humanity has learned and gained, by hard struggles and bitter lessons; to leave the national intellect fallow, and thereby give more and more scope to the merely animal passions; till, frivolous and sensual, the race sinks into the dotage of second childhood: but not self-contented or at peace. To a race in this state, most fearfully is fulfilled the world-wide law—'He that saveth his life shall lose it.' Nowhere will life and property be so insecure, as among those peoples who care for nothing but life and property, and who say, with folded hands—'Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die.' For over the lazy brute-Arcadia sweep surely terrible storms; their weakness makes them a prey (as the Paraguayans have been) to tyrant after tyrant. Nay, even tyranny itself may be a benefit to them; and the capricious and half-insane dictatorship of a Francia may be the necessary means (as it was in Paraguay from 1820 to 1840) of developing the agriculture and the manufactures of a lazy and debauched race, and thereby giving increased means of subsistence to thousands who must otherwise either have starved, or have gradually sunk into the condition of savage and godless squatters in the fertile wilderness.

The terrible lesson, that no price was too high to pay for industry and order, even of the roughest kind, which Francia taught the Paraguayans, seems not to have been lost upon them; and their conduct since his death in 1840, has formed an honourable contrast to that of the other South American republics. The general features of this improvement may be read in Mr. Mansfield's volume, pp. 458—463; and the new policy of the republic, which admitted strangers, whom Francia had so jealously excluded, was practically inaugurated in 1853, by the opening of the river Paraguay (which the jealousy of Rosas had long kept closed) to British ships as far as Assuncion. A treaty between Brazil and Paraguay has just made Assuncion the thoroughfare for the enormous mineral wealth of the western Brazil; but nothing, it seems, can permanently protect Paraguay from those miseries which have desolated every State of South America for the last forty years, save the introduction of a sturdy race of European and American colonists, protected by the strong arms of their civilized mother-countries, from the intrigue, caprice, ignorance, and brutality of the surrounding military despots for the time being. Let us trust that the alliance formed between Paraguay and England, France, the United States, and Sardinia, will not remain waste paper: but that if 'intervention' be needed, intervention will be boldly employed, to protect both the Paraguayans and the new colonists against the machinations of those surrounding States, whose political career has been marked by nothing but blood, as the many have been butchered periodically for the sake of the ambition and cupidity of the few, and their hired myrmidons. Let the European nations, or the United States, once become fully alive to the enormous capabilities of Paraguay, and self-interest

will make them interfere with a strong hand to put down that suicidal anarchy, which they now only regard with contempt: but which they will then begin to fear and hate, as a curse and a hindrance to the progress of the human commonweal. And, meanwhile, may the kindly Paraguayans enjoy themselves, as best they can, in their simple picturesque way, till the fast-approaching day shall come, when play shall be at an end, and work begin.

FROUDE'S HISTORY OF ENGLAND.*

THERE appeared, a few years since, a 'Comic History of England,' duly caricaturing and falsifying all our great national events, and representing the English people, for many centuries back, as a mob of fools and knaves, led by the nose in each generation by a few arch-fools and arch-knaves. Some thoughtful persons regarded the book with utter contempt and indignation; it seemed to them a crime to have written it; a proof of 'banausia,' as Aristotle would have called it, only to be outdone by the writing a 'Comic Bible.' After a while, however, their indignation began to subside; their second thoughts, as usual, were more charitable than their first; they were not surprised to hear that the author was an honest, just, and able magistrate; they saw that the publication of such a book involved no moral turpitude; that it was merely meant as a jest on a subject on which jesting was permissible, and as a money speculation in a field of which men had a right to make money; while all which seemed offensive in it, was merely the outcome, and as it were apotheosis, of that method of writing English history which has been popular for nearly a hundred years. 'Which of our modern historians,' they asked themselves, 'has had

* North British Review, No. LI.—'A History of England, from the Fall of Wolsey to the Death of Elizabeth.' By J. A. Froude, M.A., late Fellow of Exeter College, Oxford. London: J. W. Parker and Son, West Strand. 2 vols. 1856.

any real feeling of the importance, the sacredness, of his subject?—any real trust in, or respect for, the characters with whom he dealt? Has not the belief of each and all of them been the same—that on the whole, the many always have been fools and knaves; foolish and knavish enough, at least, to become the puppets of a few fools and knaves who held the reins of power? Have they not held that, on the whole, the problems of human nature, and human history, have been sufficiently solved by Gibbon and Voltaire, Gil Blas, and Figaro;—that our forefathers were silly barbarians;—that this glorious nineteenth century is the one region of light, and that all before was outer darkness, peopled by 'foreign devils,' Englishmen, no doubt, according to the flesh, but in spirit, in knowledge, in creed, in customs, so utterly different from ourselves, that we shall merely show our sentimentalism by doing aught but laughing at them?

On what other principle have our English histories as yet been constructed, even down to the children's books, which taught us in childhood that the history of this country was nothing but a string of foolish wars, carried on by wicked kings, for reasons hitherto unexplained, save on that great historic law of Goldsmith's by which Sir Archibald Alison would still explain the French Revolution,—

> The dog, to serve his private ends,
> Went mad, and bit the man?

It will be answered by some, and perhaps rather angrily, that these strictures are too sweeping; that there is arising, in a certain quarter, a school of history books for young people of a far more reverent tone, which tries to do full honour to the Church, and her work in the world. Those books of this school which we have seen, we must reply, seem just as much want-

ing in real reverence for the past, as the school of Gibbon and Voltaire. It is not the past which they reverence, but a few characters or facts eclectically picked out of the past, and for the most part, made to look beautiful by ignoring all the features which will not suit their preconceived pseudo-ideal. There is in these books a scarcely concealed dissatisfaction with the whole course of the British mind since the Reformation, and (though they are not inclined to confess the fact) with its whole course before the Reformation, because that course was one of steady struggle against the Papacy and its anti-national pretensions. They are the outcome of an utterly un-English tone of thought; and the so-called 'ages of faith' are pleasant and useful to them, principally because they are distant and unknown enough to enable them to conceal from their readers that in the ages on which they look back as ideally perfect, a Bernard and a Francis of Assisi were crying all day long,—'O that my head were a fountain of tears, that I might weep for the sins of my people!' Dante was cursing popes and prelates in the name of the God of Righteousness; Boccaccio and Chaucer were lifting the veil from priestly abominations of which we now are ashamed even to read; and Wolsey, seeing the rottenness of the whole system, spent his mighty talents, and at last poured out his soul unto death, in one long useless effort to make the crooked straight, and number that which had been weighed in the balances of God, and found for ever wanting. To ignore wilfully facts like these, which were patent all along to the British nation, facts on which the British laity acted, till they finally conquered at the Reformation, and on which they are acting still, and will, probably, act for ever, is not to have any real reverence for the opinions or virtues of our forefathers; and we are not astonished

to find repeated, in such books, the old stock calumnies against our lay and Protestant worthies, taken at second-hand from the pages of Lingard. In copying from Lingard, however, this party has done no more than those writers have who would repudiate any party—almost any Christian—purpose. Lingard is known to have been a learned man, and to have examined many manuscripts which few else had taken the trouble to look at; so his word is to be taken, no one thinking it worth while to ask whether he has either honestly read, or honestly quoted, the documents. It suited the sentimental and lazy liberality of the last generation to make a show of fairness, by letting the Popish historian tell his side of the story, and to sneer at the illiberal old notion, that gentlemen of his class were given to be rather careless about historic truth when they had a purpose to serve thereby; and Lingard is now actually recommended, as a standard authority for the young, by educated Protestants who seem utterly unable to see that, whether the man be honest or not, his whole view of the course of British events, since Becket first quarrelled with his king, must be antipodal to their own; and that his account of all which has passed for three hundred years since the fall of Wolsey, is most likely to be (and, indeed, may be proved to be) one huge libel on the whole nation, and the destiny which God has marked out for it.

There is, indeed, no intrinsic cause why the ecclesiastical, or pseudo-Catholic, view of history should, in any wise, conduce to a just appreciation of our forefathers. For not only did our forefathers rebel against that conception again and again, till they finally trampled it under their feet, and so appear, prima facie, as offenders to be judged at its bar; but the conception itself is one which takes the very same view of nature

as that cynic conception of which we spoke above. Man, with the Romish divines, is, ipso facto, the same being as the man of Voltaire, Le Sage, or Beaumarchais;—he is an insane and degraded being, who is to be kept in order, and, as far as may be, cured and set to work by an ecclesiastical system; and the only threads of light in the dark web of his history are clerical and theurgic, not lay and human. Voltaire is the very experimentum crucis of this ugly fact. European history looks to him what it would have looked to his Jesuit preceptors, had the sacerdotal element in it been wanting; what heathen history actually did look to them. He eliminates the sacerdotal element, and nothing remains but the chaos of apes and wolves, which the Jesuits had taught him to believe was the original substratum of society. The humanity of his history—even of his 'Pucelle d'Orléans'—is simply the humanity of Sanchez, and the rest of those vingt-quatre Pères, who hang gibbeted for ever in the pages of Pascal. He is superior to his teachers, certainly, in this, that he has hope for humanity on earth; dreams of a new and nobler life for society, by means of a true and scientific knowledge of the laws of the moral and material universe; in a word, he has, in the midst of all his filth and his atheism, a faith in a righteous and truth-revealing God, which the priests who brought him up had not. Let the truth be spoken, even though in favour of such a destroying Azrael as Voltaire. And what if his primary conception of humanity be utterly base? Is that of our modern historians so much higher? Do Christian men seem to them, on the whole, in all ages, to have had the Spirit of God with them, leading them into truth, however imperfectly and confusedly they may have learnt his lessons? Have they ever heard with their ears, or listened when

their fathers have declared unto them the noble works which God did in their days, and in the old time before them? Do they believe that the path of Christendom has been, on the whole, the path of life, and the right way, and that the living God is leading her therein? Are they proud of the old British worthies? Are they jealous and tender of the reputation of their ancestors? Do they believe that there were any worthies at all in England before the steam-engine and political economy were discovered? Do their conceptions of past society, and the past generations, retain anything of that great thought which is common to all the Arya races—that is, to all races who have left aught behind them better than mere mounds of earth—to Hindoo and Persian, Greek and Roman, Teuton and Scandinavian, that men are the sons of the heroes, who were the sons of God? Or do they believe, that for civilized people of the nineteenth century, it is as well to say as little as possible about ancestors who possessed our vices without our amenities, our ignorance without our science; who were bred, no matter how, like flies by summer heat, out of that everlasting midden which men call the world, to buzz and sting their foolish day, and leave behind them a fresh race which knows them not, and could win no honour by owning them, and which owes them no more than if it had been produced, as midden-flies were said to be of old, by some spontaneous generation?

It is not likely that this writer will be likely to undervalue political economy, or the steam-engine, or any other solid and practical good, which God has unveiled to this generation. All that he does demand (for he has a right to demand it) is, that rational men should believe that our forefathers were at least as good as we are; that whatsoever their measure

of light was, they acted up to what they knew, as faithfully as we do; and that, on the whole, it was not their fault if they did not know more. Even now, the real discoveries of the age are made, as of old, by a very few men; and, when made, have to struggle, as of old, against all manner of superstitions, lazinesses, scepticisms. Is the history of the Minié rifle one so very complimentary to our age's quickness of perception, that we can afford to throw many stones at the prejudices of our ancestors? The truth is that, as of old, 'many men talk of Robin Hood, who never shot in his bow;' and many talk of Bacon, who never discovered a law by induction since they were born. As far as our experience goes, those who are loudest in their jubilations over the wonderful progress of the age, are those who have never helped that progress forward one inch, but find it a great deal easier and more profitable to use the results which humbler men have painfully worked out, as second-hand capital for hustings-speeches and railway books, and flatter a mechanics' institute of self-satisfied youths, by telling them that the least instructed of them is wiser than Erigena or Roger Bacon. Let them be. They have their reward. And so also has the patient and humble man of science, who, the more he knows, confesses the more how little he knows, and looks back with affectionate reverence on the great men of old time,—on Archimedes and Ptolemy, Aristotle and Pliny, and many another honourable man who, walking in great darkness, sought a ray of light, and did not seek in vain,—as integral parts of that golden chain of which he is but one link more; as scientific forefathers, without whose aid his science could not have had a being.

Meanwhile, this general tone of irreverence for our forefathers is no hopeful sign. It is unwise to 'inquire

why the former times were better than these;' to hang lazily and weakly over some eclectic dream of a past golden age; for to do so is to deny that God is working in this age, as well as in past ages; that His light is as near us now as it was to the worthies of old time. But it is more than unwise to boast and rejoice that the former times were worse than these; and to teach young people to say in their hearts, 'What clever fellows we are, compared to our stupid old fogies of fathers!' More than unwise; for possibly it may be false in fact. To look at the political and moral state of Europe at this moment, Christendom can hardly afford to look down on any preceding century, and seems to be in want of something which neither science nor constitutional government seem able to supply. Whether our forefathers also lacked that something, we will not inquire just now; but if they did, their want of scientific and political knowledge was evidently not the cause of the defect; or why is not Spain now infinitely better, instead of being infinitely worse off, than she was three hundred years ago?

At home, too —— But on the question whether we are so very much better off than our forefathers, Mr. Froude, not we, must speak: for he has deliberately, in his new history, set himself to the solution of this question, and we will not anticipate what he has to say; what we would rather insist on now are the moral effects produced on our young people by books which teach them to look with contempt on all generations but their own, and with suspicion on all public characters save a few contemporaries of their own especial party.

There is an ancient Hebrew book, which contains a singular story concerning a grandson who was cursed because his father laughed at the frailty of the grandfather. Whether the reader shall regard that story (as we do) as a literal fact recorded by inspired wisdom, as

an instance of one of the great root-laws of family life, and therefore of that national life which (as the Hebrew book so cunningly shows) is the organic development of the family life: or whether he shall treat it (as we do not) as a mere apologue or myth, he must confess that it is equally grand in its simplicity, and singular in its unexpected result. The words of the story, taken literally and simply, no more justify the notion that Canaan's slavery was any magical consequence of the old patriarch's anger, than they do the well-known theory, that it was the cause of the negro's blackness. Ham shows a low, foul, irreverent, unnatural temper towards his father. The old man's shame is not a cause of shame to his son, but only of laughter. Noah prophesies (in the fullest and deepest meaning of that word) that a curse will come upon that son's son; that he will be a slave of slaves; and reason and experience show that he spoke truth. Let the young but see that their fathers have no reverence for the generation before them, then will they in turn have no reverence for their fathers. Let them be taught that the sins of their ancestors involve their own honour so little, that they need not take any trouble to clear the blot off the scutcheon, but may safely sit down and laugh over it, saying, 'Very likely it is true. If so, it is very amusing, and if not—what matter?'—Then those young people are being bred up in a habit of mind which contains in itself all the capabilities of degradation and slavery, in self-conceit, hasty assertion, disbelief in nobleness, and all the other 'credulities of scepticism;' parted from that past from which they take their common origin, they are parted also from each other, and become selfish, self-seeking, divided, and therefore weak; disbelieving in the nobleness of those who have gone before them, they learn more and more to disbelieve in the nobleness of

those around them; and by denying God's works of old, come, by a just and dreadful Nemesis, to be unable to see His works in the men of their own day; to suspect and impugn valour, righteousness, disinterestedness in their contemporaries; to attribute low motives; to pride themselves on looking at men and things as 'men who know the world,' so the young puppies style it; to be less and less chivalrous to women, less and less respectful to old men, less and less ashamed of boasting about their sensual appetites; in a word, to show all those symptoms which, when fully developed, leave a generation without fixed principles, without strong faith, without self-restraint, without moral cohesion, the sensual and divided prey of any race, however inferior in scientific knowledge, which has a clear and fixed notion of its work and destiny. That many of these signs are showing themselves more and more ominously in our young men, from the fine gentleman who rides in Rotten Row, to the boy-mechanic who listens enraptured to Mr. Holyoake's exposures of the absurdity of all human things save Mr. Holyoake's self, is a fact which presses itself most on those who have watched this age most carefully, and who (rightly or wrongly) attribute much of this miserable temper to the way in which history has been written among us for the last hundred years.

Whether or not Mr. Froude would agree with these notions, he is more or less responsible for them; for they have been suggested by his 'History of England from the fall of Wolsey to the death of Elizabeth.' It was impossible to read the book, without feeling the contrast between its tone and that of every other account of the times which one had ever seen. Mr. Froude seems to have set to work upon the principle, too much ignored in judging of the past, that the historian's success must depend on his dramatic faculty; and not merely on

that constructive element of the faculty in which Mr. Macaulay shows such astonishing power, but on that higher and deeper critical element which ought to precede the constructive process, and without which the constructive element will merely enable a writer, as was once bitterly but truly said, 'to produce the greatest possible misrepresentation, with the least possible distortion of fact.' That deeper dramatic faculty, the critical, is not logical merely, but moral, and depends on the moral health, the wideness and heartiness of his moral sympathies, by which he can put himself, as Mr. Froude has attempted to do, and as we think successfully, into the place of each and every character, and not merely feel for them, but feel with them. He does not merely describe their actions from the outside, attributing them arbitrarily to motives which are pretty sure to be the lowest possible, because it is easier to conceive a low motive than a lofty one, and to call a man a villain, than to unravel patiently the tangled web of good and evil of which his thoughts are composed. He has attempted to conceive of his characters, as he would if they had been his own contemporaries and equals, acting, speaking in his company; and he has, therefore, thought himself bound to act toward them by those rules of charity and courtesy, common alike to Christian morals, English law, and decent society; namely, to hold every man innocent till he is proved guilty; where a doubt exists, to give the prisoner at the bar the benefit of it; not to excite the minds of the public against him by those insinuative or vituperative epithets, which are but adders and scorpions; and on the whole, to believe that a man's death and burial is not the least reason for ceasing to behave to him like a gentleman and a Christian. We are not inclined to play with solemn things, or to copy Lucian and

Quevedo in writing dialogues of the dead: but what dialogues might some bold pen dash off, between the old sons of Anak, at whose coming Hades has long ago been moved, and to receive whom all the kings of the nations have risen up, and the little scribblers who have fancied themselves able to fathom and describe characters to whom they were but pigmies! Conceive a half-hour's interview between Queen Elizabeth and some popular lady-scribbler, who has been deluding herself into the fancy that gossiping inventories of millinery are history. . . . 'You pretend to judge me, whose labours, whose cares, whose fiery trials, were beside yours, as the heaving volcano beside a boy's fire-work? You condemn my weaknesses? Know that they were stronger than your strength! You impute motives for my sins? Know that till you are as great as I have been, for evil and for good, you will be as little able to comprehend my sins as my righteousness! Poor marsh-croaker, who wishest not merely to swell up to the bulk of the ox, but to embrace it in thy little paws, know thine own size, and leave me to be judged by Him who made me!' . . . How the poor soul would shrink back into nothing before that lion eye which saw and guided the destinies of the world, and all the flunkey-nature (if such a vice exist beyond the grave) come out in utter abjectness, as if the ass in the fable, on making his kick at the dead lion, had discovered to his horror that the lion was alive and well —— Spirit of Quevedo! Finish for us the picture which we cannot finish for ourselves.

In a very different spirit from such has Mr. Froude approached these times. Great and good deeds were done in them; and it has therefore seemed probable to him that there were great and good men there to do them. Thoroughly awake to the fact that the Reformation was the new birth of the British nation, it has

seemed to him a puzzling theory, which attributes its success to the lust of a tyrant, and the cupidity of his courtiers. It has evidently seemed to him paradoxical that a king who was reputed to have been a satyr, instead of keeping as many concubines as seemed good to him, should have chosen to gratify his passions by entering six times into the strict bonds of matrimony, religiously observing those bonds. It has seemed to him even more paradoxical, that one reputed to have been the most sanguinary tyrant who ever disgraced the English throne, should have been not only endured, but loved and regretted by a fierce and free-spoken people; and he, we suppose, could comprehend as little as we can the reasoning of such a passage as the following, especially when it proceeds from the pen of so wise and venerable a writer as Mr. Hallam.

'A government administered with so frequent violations, not only of the chartered privileges of Englishmen, but of those still more sacred rights which natural law has established, must have been regarded, one would imagine, with just abhorrence, and earnest longings for a change. Yet contemporary authorities by no means answer this expectation. Some mention Henry after his death in language of eulogy;' (not only Elizabeth, be it remembered, but Cromwell also always spoke of him with deepest respect; and their language always found an echo in the English heart;) 'and if we except those whom attachment to the ancient religion had inspired with hatred to his memory, few seem to have been aware that his name would descend to posterity among those of the many tyrants and oppressors of innocence, whom the wrath of heaven has raised up, and the servility of man endured.'

The names of even those few we should be glad to have; for it seems to us, that (with the exception of a few ultra-Protestants, who could not forgive that per-

secution of the reformers, which he certainly permitted, if not encouraged, during one period of his reign,) no one adopted the modern view of his character, till more than a hundred years after his death, when belief in all nobleness and faith had died out among an ignoble and faithless generation, and the scandalous gossip of such a light rogue as Osborne was taken into the place of honest and respectful history.

To clear up such seeming paradoxes as these, by carefully examining the facts of the sixteenth century, has been Mr. Froude's work; and we have the results of his labour in two volumes, embracing only a period of eleven years; but giving promise that the mysteries of the succeeding time will be well cleared up for us in future volumes, and that we shall find our forefathers to have been, if no better, at least no worse men, than ourselves. He has brought to the task known talents and learning, a mastery over English prose almost unequalled in this generation, a spirit of most patient and good-tempered research, and that intimate knowledge of human motives and passions which his former books have shown, and which we have a right to expect from any scholar who has really profited by Aristotle's unrivalled Ethics. He has fairly examined every contemporary document within his reach, and, as he informs us in the preface, he has been enabled, through the kindness of Sir Francis Palgrave, to consult a great number of MSS. relating to the Reformation, hitherto all but unknown to the public, and referred to in his work as MSS. in the Rolls' House, where the originals are easily accessible. These, he states, he intends to publish, with additions from his own reading, as soon as he has brought his history down to the end of Henry the Eighth's reign.

But Mr. Froude's chief text-book seems to have been

State Papers and Acts of Parliament. He has begun his work in the only temper in which a man can write accurately and well; in a temper of trust toward the generation whom he describes. The only temper; for if a man has no affection for the characters of whom he reads, he will never understand them; if he has no respect for his subject, he will never take the trouble to exhaust it. To such an author the Statutes at large, as the deliberate expression of the nation's will and conscience, will appear the most important of all sources of information; the first to be consulted, the last to be contradicted; the Canon, which is not to be checked and corrected by private letters and flying pamphlets, but which is to check and correct them. This seems Mr. Froude's theory; and we are at no pains to confess, that if he be wrong, we see no hope of arriving at truth. If these public documents are not to be admitted in evidence before all others, we see no hope for the faithful and earnest historian; he must give himself up to swim as he may on the frothy stream of private letters, anecdotes, and pamphlets, the puppet of the ignorance, credulity, peevishness, spite, of any and every gossip and scribbler.

Beginning his history with the fall of Wolsey, Mr. Froude enters, of course, at his first step, into the vexed question of Henry's divorce: an introductory chapter, on the general state of England, we shall notice hereafter.

A very short inspection of the method in which he handles the divorce question, gives one at once confidence in his temper and judgment, and hope that one may at last come to some clearer understanding of it than the old law gives us, which we have already quoted, concerning the dog who went mad to serve his private ends. In a few masterly pages he sketches for us the

rotting and dying Church, which had recovered her power after the wars of the Roses, over an exhausted nation: but in form only, not in life. Wolsey, with whom he has fair and understanding sympathy, he sketches as the transition minister, 'loving England well, but loving Rome better,' who intends a reform of the Church, but who, as the Pope's commissioner for that very purpose, is liable to a præmunire, and therefore dare not appeal to Parliament to carry out his designs, even if he could have counted on the Parliament's assistance in any measures designed to invigorate the Church. At last arises in the divorce question, the accident which brings to an issue on its most vital point the question of Papal power in England, and which finally draws down ruin upon Wolsey himself.

This appears to have begun in the winter of 1526-7. It was proposed to marry the Princess Mary to a son of the French King. The Bishop of Tarbès, who conducted the negotiations, advised himself (apparently by special instigation of the devil) to raise a question as to her legitimacy.

No more ingenious plan for convulsing England could have been devised. The marriage from which Mary sprang only stood on a reluctant and doubtful dispensation of the Pope's. Henry had entered into it at the entreaty of his ministers, contrary to a solemn promise given to his father, and in spite of the remonstrances of the Archbishop of Canterbury. No blessing seemed to have rested on it. All his children had died young, save his one sickly girl: a sure note of divine displeasure in the eyes of that coarse-minded Church which has always declared the chief, if not the only, purpose of marriage to be the procreation of children.

But more; to question Mary's legitimacy was to throw open the question of succession to half-a-dozen

ambitious competitors. It was, too, probably to involve England at Henry's death, in another civil war of the Roses, and in all the internecine horrors which were still rankling in the memories of men, and probably, also, to bring down a French or Scotch invasion. There was, then, too good reason, as Mr. Froude shows at length, for Wolsey's assertion to John Cassilis—'If his Holiness, which God forbid, shall show himself unwilling to listen to the King's demands, to me assuredly it will be but grief to live longer, for the innumerable evils which I foresee will follow. . . . Nothing before us but universal and inevitable ruin.' Too good reason there was for the confession of the Pope himself to Gardiner, 'What danger it was to the realm to have this thing hang in suspense. . . . That without an heir-male, &c., the realm was like to come to dissolution.' Too good reason for the bold assertion of the Cardinal-Governor of Bologna, that 'he knew the guise of England as few men did, and that if the King should die without heirs-male, he was sure that it would cost two hundred thousand men's lives; and that to avoid this mischief by a second marriage, he thought, would deserve heaven.' Too good reason for the assertion of Hall, that 'all indifferent and discreet persons judged it necessary for the Pope to grant Henry a divorce, and, by enabling him to marry again, give him the hope of an undisputed heir-male.' The Pope had full power to do this; in fact, such cases had been for centuries integral parts of his jurisdiction, as head of Christendom. But he was at once too timid and too time-serving to exercise his acknowledged authority; and thus, just at the very moment when his spiritual power was being tried in the balance, he chose himself to expose his political power to the same test. Both were equally found wanting. He had, it ap-

peared, as little heart to do justice among kings and princes, as he had to seek and to save the souls of men; and the Reformation followed as a matter of course.

Through the tangled brakes of this divorce question, Mr. Froude leads us with ease and grace, throwing light, and even beauty, into dark nooks where before all was mist, not merely by his intimate acquaintance with the facts, but still more by his deep knowledge of human character, and of woman's even more than of man's. For the first time, the actors in this long tragedy appear to us as no mere bodiless and soulless names, but as beings of like passions with ourselves, comprehensible, coherent, organic, even in their inconsistencies. Catherine of Arragon is still the Catherine of Shakspeare; but Mr. Froude has given us the key to many parts of her story which Shakspeare left unexplained, and delicately enough has made us understand how Henry's affections, if he ever had any for her—faithfully as he had kept (with one exception) to that loveless mariage de convenance,—may have been gradually replaced by indifference and even dislike, long before the divorce was forced on him as a question not only of duty to the nation, but of duty to Heaven. And that he did see it in this latter light, Mr. Froude brings proof from his own words, from which we can escape only by believing that the confessedly honest 'Bluff King Hal' had suddenly become a consummate liar and a canting hypocrite.

Delicately, too, as if speaking of a lady whom he had met in modern society (as a gentleman is bound to do,) does Mr. Froude touch on the sins of that hapless woman, who played for Henry's crown, and paid for it with her life. With all mercy and courtesy, he gives us proof (for he thinks it his duty to do so) of the French mis-education, the petty cunning, the ten-

dency to sensuality, the wilful indelicacy of her position in Henry's household as the rival of his queen, which made her last catastrophe at least possible. Of the justice of her sentence he has no doubt, any more than of her pre-engagement to some one, as proved by a letter existing among Cromwell's papers. Poor thing, if she did that which was laid to her charge, and more, she did nothing, after all, but what she had been in the habit of seeing the queens and princesses of the French court do notoriously, and laugh over shamelessly; while, as Mr. Froude well says, 'If we are to hold her entirely free from guilt, we place not only the King, but the Privy-Council, the Judges, the Lords and Commons, and the two Houses of Convocation, in a position fatal to their honour and degrading to ordinary humanity:' (Mr. Froude should have added Anne Boleyn's own uncle, the Duke of Norfolk, and her father, who were on the commission appointed to try her lovers, and her cousin, Anthony St. Leger, a man of the very highest character and ability, who was on the jury which found a true bill against her.) 'We cannot,' continues Mr. Froude, 'acquiesce without inquiry in so painful a conclusion. The English nation, also, as well as she, deserves justice at our hands; and it cannot be thought uncharitable if we look with some scrutiny at the career of a person, who, but for the catastrophe with which it closed, would not have so readily obtained forgiveness for having admitted the addresses of the king, or for having received the homage of the court as its future sovereign, while the king's wife, her mistress, as yet resided under the same roof.' Mr. Froude's conclusion is, after examining the facts, the same with the whole nation of England in Henry's reign: but no one can accuse him of want of sympathy with the unhappy woman, who reads the eloquent and

affecting account of her trial and death, which ends his second volume. Our only fear is, that by having thus told the truth, he has, instead of justifying our ancestors, only added one more to the list of people who are to be 'given up' with a cynical shrug and smile. We have heard already, and among young ladies, too, who can be as cynical as other people in these times, such speeches as, 'Well, I suppose he has proved Anne Boleyn to be a bad creature; but that does not make that horrid Henry any more right in cutting off her head.' Thus two people will be despised, where only one was before; and the fact still ignored, that it is just as senseless to say that Henry cut off Anne Boleyn's head, as that Queen Victoria hanged Palmer. Death, and death of a far more horrible kind than that which Anne Boleyn suffered, was the established penalty of the offences of which she was convicted; and which had in her case this fearful aggravation, that they were offences not against Henry merely, but against the whole English nation. She had been married in order that there might be an undisputed heir to the throne, and a fearful war avoided. To throw into dispute, by any conduct of hers, the legitimacy of her own offspring, argues a levity or a hard-heartedness which of itself deserved the severest punishment.

We will pass from this disagreeable topic, to Mr. Froude's life-like sketch of Pope Clement, and the endless tracasseries into which his mingled weakness and cunning led him, and which, like most crooked dealings, ended by defeating their own object. Pages 125 and sqq. of Vol. I. contain sketches of him, his thoughts and ways, as amusing as they are historically important: but we have no space to quote from them. It will be well for those to whom the Reformation is still a matter of astonishment, to read those pages, and

consider what manner of man he was, in spite of all pretended divine authority, under whose rule the Romish system received its irrecoverable wound.

But of all these figures, not excepting Henry's own, Wolsey stands out as the most grand and tragical; and Mr. Froude has done good service to history, if only in making us understand at last the wondrous 'butcher's son.' Shakspeare seems to have felt (though he could explain the reason neither to his auditors, nor, perhaps, to himself) that Wolsey was, on the whole, a heroical man. Mr. Froude shows at once his strength and his weakness; his deep sense of the rottenness of the Church; his purpose to purge her from those abominations which were as well known, it seems, to him, as they were afterwards to the whole people of England; his vast schemes for education; his still vaster schemes for breaking the alliance with Spain, and uniting France and England as fellow-servants of the Pope, and twin-pillars of the sacred fabric of the Church, which helped so much toward his interest in Catherine's divorce, as a 'means' (these are his own words) 'to bind my most excellent sovereign and this glorious realm to the holy Roman See in faith and obedience for ever;' his hopes of deposing the Emperor, putting down the German heresies, and driving back the Turks beyond the pale of Christendom; his pathetic confession to the Bishop of Bayonne, that 'if he could only see the divorce arranged, the King re-married, the succession settled, and the laws and the Church reformed, he would retire from the world, and would serve God the remainder of his days.'

Peace be with him! He was surely a noble soul; misled, it may be, (as who is not when his turn comes,) by the pride of conscious power; and 'though he loved England well, yet loving Rome better:' but still it is

a comfort to see, either in past or in present, one more brother whom we need not despise, even though he may have wasted his energies on a dream.

And on a dream he did waste them, in spite of all his cunning. As Mr. Froude, in a noble passage, says :—

> Extravagant as his hopes seem, the prospect of realizing them was, humanly speaking, neither chimerical, nor even improbable. He had but made the common mistake of men of the world, who are the representatives of an old order of things, when that order is doomed and dying. He could not read the signs of the times; and confounding the barrenness of death with the barrenness of winter, which might be followed by a new spring and summer, he believed that the old life-tree of Catholicism, which in fact was but cumbering the ground, might bloom again in its old beauty. The thing which he called heresy was the fire of Almighty God, which no politic congregation of princes, no state machinery, though it were never so active, could trample out; and as, in the early years of Christianity, the meanest slave who was thrown to the wild beasts for his presence at the forbidden mysteries of the Gospel, saw deeper, in the divine power of his faith, into the future even of this earthly world than the sagest of his imperial persecutors,—so a truer political prophet than Wolsey would have been found in the most ignorant of those poor men, for whom his police were searching in the purlieus of London, who were risking death and torture in disseminating the pernicious volumes of the English Testament.

It will be seen from this magnificent passage that Mr. Froude is distinctly a Protestant. He is one, to judge from his book; and all the better one, because he can sympathize with whatsoever nobleness, even with whatsoever mere conservatism, existed in the Catholic party. And therefore, because he has sympathies which are not merely party ones, but human ones, he has given the world, in these two volumes, a history of the early Reformation altogether unequalled. This human sympathy, while it has enabled him to embalm in most affecting prose the sad story of the noble, though mistaken Carthusians, and to make even the Nun of Kent interesting, because truly womanly, in her very folly and deceit, has enabled him likewise

to show us the hearts of the early martyrs as they never have been shown before. His sketch of the Christian Brothers, and his little true romance of Anthony Dalaber, the Oxford student, are gems of writing; while his conception of Latimer, on whom he looks as the hero of the movement, and all but an English Luther, is as worthy of Latimer as it is of himself. It is written as history should be, discriminatingly, patiently, and yet lovingly and genially; rejoicing not in evil, but in the truth; and rejoicing still more in goodness, where goodness can honestly be found.

To the ecclesiastical and political elements in the English Reformation, Mr. Froude devotes a large portion of his book. We shall not enter into the questions which he discusses therein. That aspect of the movement is a foreign and a delicate subject, from discussing which a Scotch periodical may be excused. North Britain had a somewhat different problem to solve from her southern sister, and solved it in an altogether different way: but this we must say, that the facts, and still more, the State-Papers, (especially the petition of the Commons, as contrasted with the utterly benighted answer of the Bishops,) which Mr. Froude gives, are such as to raise our opinion of the method on which the English part of the Reformation was conducted, and make us believe, that in this, as in other matters, both Henry and his Parliament, though still doctrinal Romanists, were sound-headed practical Englishmen.

This result is of the same kind as most of those at which Mr. Froude arrives. They form altogether a general justification of our ancestors in Henry the Eighth's time, if not of Henry the Eighth himself, which frees Mr. Froude from that charge of irreverence to the past generations, against which we protested in

the beginning of this Article. We hope honestly that he may be as successful in his next volumes as he has been in these, in vindicating the worthies of the 16th century. Whether he shall fail or not, and whether or not he has altogether succeeded, in the volumes before us, his book marks a new epoch, and, we trust, a healthier and loftier one, in English history. We trust that they inaugurate a time in which the deeds of our forefathers shall be looked on as sacred heirlooms; their sins as our shame, their victories as bequests to us; when men shall have sufficient confidence in those to whom they owe their existence, to scrutinize faithfully and patiently every fact concerning them, with a proud trust, that search as they may, they will not find much of which to be ashamed.

Lastly, Mr. Froude takes a view of Henry's character, not, indeed, new, (for it is the original one,) but obsolete for now two hundred years. Let it be well understood, that he makes no attempt (he has been accused thereof) to whitewash Henry: all that he does is, to remove as far as he can, the modern layers of 'black-wash,' and to let the man himself, fair or foul, be seen. For the result he is not responsible: it depends on facts; and unless Mr. Froude has knowingly concealed facts, to an amount of which even a Lingard might be ashamed, the result is, that Henry the Eighth was actually very much the man which he appeared to be to the English nation in his own generation, and for two or three generations after his death,—a result which need not astonish us, if we will only give our ancestors credit for having, at least, as much common sense as ourselves, and believe (why should we not?) that, on the whole, they understood their own business better than we are likely to do.

The 'bloated tyrant,' it is confessed, contrived, some-

how or other, to be popular enough. Mr. Froude tells us the reasons. He was not born a bloated tyrant, any more than Queen Elizabeth (though the fact is not generally known) was born a wizened old woman. He was, from youth, till he was long past his grand climacteric, a very handsome, powerful, and active man, temperate in his habits, good-humoured, frank and honest in his speech (as even his enemies are forced to confess). He seems to have been (as his portraits prove sufficiently), for good and for evil, a thorough John Bull; a thorough Englishman: but one of the very highest type.

'Had he died (says Mr. Froude) previous to the first agitation of the divorce, his loss would have been deplored as one of the heaviest misfortunes which had ever befallen this country, and he would have left a name which would have taken its place in history by the side of the Black Prince, or the Conqueror of Agincourt. Left at the most trying age, with his character unformed, with the means of gratifying every inclination, and married by his ministers, when a boy, to an unattractive woman, far his senior, he had lived for thirty-six years almost without blame, and bore through England the reputation of an upright and virtuous king. Nature had been prodigal to him of her rarest gifts. . . . Of his intellectual ability we are not left to judge from the suspicious panegyrics of his contemporaries. His State Papers and letters may be placed by the side of those of Wolsey, or of Cromwell, and they lose nothing by the comparison. Though they are broadly different, the perception is equally clear, the expression equally powerful; and they breathe throughout an irresistible vigour of purpose. In addition to this he had a fine musical taste, carefully cultivated; he spoke and wrote in four languages; and his knowledge of a multitude of subjects, with which his versatile ability made him conversant, would have formed the reputation of any ordinary man. He was among the best physicians of his age. He was his own engineer, inventing improvements in artillery, and new constructions in shipbuilding; and this not with the condescending incapacity of a royal amateur, but with thorough workmanlike understanding. His reading was vast, especially in theology. He was 'attentive,' as it is called, 'to his religious duties,' being present at the services in chapel two or three times a day with unfailing regularity, and showing, to outward appearance, a real sense of religious obligation in the energy and purity of his life. In private he was good-humoured and good-natured. His letters to his secretaries, though never undignified, are simple, easy, and unrestrained, and the letters written by them

to him are similarly plain and business-like, as if the writers knew that the person whom they were addressing disliked compliments, and chose to be treated as a man. He seems to have been always kind, always considerate; inquiring into their private concerns with genuine interest, and winning, as a consequence, their sincere and unaffected attachment. As a ruler, he had been eminently popular. All his wars had been successful. He had the splendid tastes in which the English people most delighted; . . . he had more than once been tried with insurrection, which he had soothed down without bloodshed, and extinguished in forgiveness. . . . . And it is certain, that if he had died before the divorce was mooted, Henry VIII., like the Roman emperor said by Tacitus to have been 'consensu omnium dignus imperii nisi imperasset,' would have been considered, by posterity, as formed by Providence for the conduct of the Reformation, and his loss would have been deplored as a perpetual calamity.

Mr. Froude has, of course, not written these words without having facts whereby to prove them. One he gives in an important note containing an extract from a letter of the Venetian ambassador in 1515. At least, if his conclusions be correct, we must think twice ere we deny his assertion, that 'the man best able of all living Englishmen to govern England, had been set to do it by the conditions of his birth.'

'We are bound,' as Mr. Froude says, 'to allow him the benefit of his past career, and be careful to remember it, in interpreting his later actions.' 'The true defect in his moral constitution, that 'intense and imperious will,' common to all princes of the Plantagenet blood, had not yet been tested.' That he did, in his later years, act in many ways neither wisely or well, no one denies; that this conduct did not alienate the hearts of his subjects, is what needs explanation; and Mr. Froude's opinions on this matter, novel as they are, and utterly opposed to that of the standard modern historians, require careful examination. Now we are not inclined to debate Henry the Eighth's character, or any other subject, as between Mr. Froude, and an author of the obscurantist or pseudo-conservative school. Mr. Froude is a Liberal; and so are we. We wish to

look at the question as between Mr. Froude and other Liberals; and therefore, of 'course,' first, as between Mr. Froude and Mr. Hallam.

Mr. Hallam's name is so venerable, and his work so important, that, to set ourselves up as judges in this, or in any matter, between him and Mr. Froude, would be mere impertinence: but speaking merely as learners, we have surely a right to inquire, why Mr. Hallam has entered on the whole question of Henry's relations to his Parliament with a præjudicium against them; for which Mr. Froude finds no ground whatsoever in fact. Why are all acts both of Henry and his Parliament to be taken in malam partem? They were not Whigs, certainly: neither were Socrates and Plato, nor even St. Paul and St. John. They may have been honest men, as men go, or they may not: but why is there to be a feeling against them, rather than for them? Why is Henry always called a tyrant, and his Parliament servile? The epithets have become so common and unquestioned, that our interrogation may seem startling. Still we make it. Why was Henry a tyrant? That may be true, but must be proved by facts. Where are they? Is the mere fact of a monarch's asking for money a crime in him and in his ministers? The question would rather seem to be, Were the moneys for which Henry asked needed or not; and when granted, were they rightly or wrongly applied? And on these subjects we want much more information than we obtain from any epithets. The author of a constitutional history should rise above epithets: or, if he uses them, should corroborate them by facts. Why should not historians be as fair and as cautious in accusing Henry and Wolsey, as they would be in accusing Queen Victoria and Lord Palmerston? What right, allow us to ask, has a grave constitutional historian to say, that

'We cannot, indeed, doubt, that the unshackled and despotic condition of his friend, Francis I., afforded a mortifying contrast to Henry?' What document exists, in which Henry is represented as regretting that he is the king of a free people?—for such Mr. Hallam confesses, just above, England was held to be, and was actually, in comparison of France. If the document does not exist, Mr. Hallam has surely stepped out of the field of the historian into that of the novelist, à la Scott or Dumas. The Parliament sometimes grants Henry's demands: sometimes it refuses them, and he has to help himself by other means. Why are both cases to be interpreted in malam partem? Why is the Parliament's granting to be always a proof of its servility?—its refusing, always a proof of Henry's tyranny and rapacity? Both views are mere præjudicia, reasonable perhaps, and possible: but why is not a præjudicium of the opposite kind as rational and as possible? Why has not a historian a right to start, as Mr. Froude does, by taking for granted, that both parties may have been on the whole right; that the Parliament granted certain sums, because Henry was right in asking for them; refused others because Henry was wrong; even that, in some cases, Henry may have been right in asking, the Parliament wrong in refusing; and that in such a case, under the pressure of critical times, Henry was forced to get as he could the money, which he saw that the national cause required? Let it be as folks will. Let Henry be sometimes right, and the Parliament sometimes likewise; or the Parliament always right, or Henry always right; or anything else, save this strange diseased theory, that both must have been always wrong, and that evidence to that effect failing, motives must be insinuated, or openly asserted, from the writer's mere imagination. This may be a dream: but it is as easy to imagine as

the other, and more pleasant also. It will probably be answered (though not by Mr. Hallam himself) by a sneer; 'You do not seem to know much of the world, sir.' But so would Figaro and Gil Blas have said, and on exactly the same grounds.

Let us examine a stock instance of Henry's 'rapacity' and his Parliament's servility, namely, the exactions in 1524 and 1525, and the subsequent 'release of the king's debts,' which a late writer,—in a Review conducted by University men, and therefore, one would have supposed, superior to the stale and dangerous habit of reviewing one book by another,—quoted the other day, second-hand, out of Hallam, as a 'settler' to Mr. Froude's view of Henry and his Parliament. What are the facts of the case? France and Scotland had attacked England in 1514. The Scotch were beaten at Flodden. The French lost Tournay and Therounne, and, when peace was made, agreed to pay the expenses of the war. Times changed, and the expenses were not paid.

A similar war arose in 1524, and cost England immense sums. A large army was maintained on the Scotch Border, another army invaded France; and Wolsey, not venturing to call a Parliament,—because he was, as Pope's legate, liable to a præmunire,—raised money by contributions and benevolences, which were levied, it seems on the whole, uniformly and equally (save that they weighed more heavily on the rich than on the poor, if that be a fault), and differed from taxes only in not having received the consent of Parliament. Doubtless, this was not the best way of raising money: but what if, under the circumstances, it were the only one? What if, too, on the whole, the money so raised was really given willingly by the nation? The sequel alone could decide that.

The first contribution for which Wolsey asked was paid. The second was resisted, and was not paid; proving thereby that the nation need not pay unless it chose. The Court gave way; and the war became defensive only, till 1525.

Then the tide turned. The danger, then, was not from Francis, but from the Emperor. Francis was taken prisoner at Pavia; and shortly after, Rome was sacked by Bourbon.

The effect of all this in England is told at large in Mr. Froude's second chapter. Henry became bond for Francis's ransom, to be paid to the Emperor. He spent 500,000 crowns more in paying the French army; and in the terms of peace made with France, a sum-total was agreed on for the whole debt, old and new, to be paid as soon as possible; and an annual pension of 500,000 crowns beside. The French exchequer, however, still remained bankrupt, and again the money was not paid.

Parliament, when it met in 1529, reviewed the circumstances of the expenditure, and finding it all such as the nation on the whole approved, legalized the taxation by benevolences, retrospectively; and this is the whole mare's nest of the first payment of Henry's debts; if, at least, any faith is to be put in the preamble of the Act for the release of the King's Debts, 21 Hen. VIII. c. 24. 'The King's loving subjects, the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in this present Parliament assembled, calling to remembrance the inestimable costs, charges, and expenses which the King's Highness hath necessarily been compelled to support and sustain since his assumption to his crown, estate, and dignity royal, as well for the extinction of a right dangerous and damnable schism, sprung in the Church, as for the modifying the insatiable and in-

ordinate ambition of them, who, while aspiring to the monarchy of Christendom, did put universal troubles and divisions in the same, intending, if they might, not only to have subdued this realm, but also all the rest, unto their power and subjection—for resistance whereof, the King's Highness was compelled to marvellous charges—both for the supportation of sundry armies by sea and land, and also for divers and manifold contribution on hand, to save and keep his own subjects at home in rest and repose—which hath been so politically handled, that when the most part of all Christian lands have been infested with cruel wars, the great Head and Prince of the world (the Pope!) brought into captivity, cities and towns taken, spoiled, burnt, and sacked—the King's said subjects in all this time, by the high providence and politic means of his Grace, have been nevertheless preserved, defended, and maintained from all these inconvenients, &c.

'Considering, furthermore, that his Highness, in and about the premises, hath been fain to employ not only all such sums of money as hath risen or grown by contributions made unto his Grace by his loving subjects —but also, over and above the same, sundry other notable and excellent sums of his own treasure and yearly revenues, among which manifold great sums so employed, his Highness, also, as is notoriously known, and as doth evidently appear by the ACCOUNTS OF THE SAME, hath to that use, and none other, converted all such money as by any of his subjects hath been advanced to his Grace by way of prest or loan, either particularly, or by any taxation made of the same—being things so well collocate and bestowed, seeing the said high and great fruits and effects thereof insured to the surety and commodity and tranquillity of this realm—of our mind and consent, do freely, absolutely,

give and grant to the King's Highness all and every sum or sums of money,' &c.

The second release of the King's debts, in 1544, is very similar. The King's debts and necessities were really, when we come to examine them, those of the nation: in 1538-40 England was put into a thorough state of defence from end to end. Fortresses were built along the Scottish Border, and all along the coast opposite France and Flanders. The people were drilled and armed, the fleet equipped; and the nation, for the time, became one great army. And nothing but this, as may be proved by an overwhelming mass of evidence, saved the country from invasion. Here were enormous necessary expenses which must be met.

In 1543, a million crowns were to have been paid by Francis the First, as part of his old debt. And it was not paid, but, on the contrary, Henry had to go to war for it. The nation again relinquished their claim, and allowed Henry to raise another benevolence in 1545, concerning which Mr. Hallam tells us a great deal, but not one word of the political circumstances which led to it or to the release, keeping his sympathies and his paper for the sorrows of refractory Alderman Reed, who, refusing (alone of all the citizens) to contribute to the support of troops on the Scotch Border or elsewhere, was sent down, by a sort of rough justice, to serve on the Scotch Border himself, and judge of the 'perils of the nation' with his own eyes; and being (one is pleased to say) taken prisoner by the Scots, had to pay a great deal more as ransom than he would have paid as benevolence.

But to return. What proof is there in all this, of that servility which most historians, and Mr. Hallam among the rest, are wont to attribute to Henry's Parliaments? What feeling appears on the face of this

document, which we have given and quoted, but one honourable to the nation? Through the falsehood of a foreign nation, the King is unable to perform his engagements to the people. Is not the just and generous course in such a case, to release him from those engagements? Does this preamble, does a single fact of the case, justify historians in talking of these 'king's debts' in just the same tone as that in which they would have spoken if the King had squandered the money on private pleasures? Perhaps most people who write small histories, believe that this really was the case. They certainly would gather no other impression from the pages of Mr. Hallam. No doubt the act must have been burdensome on some people. Many, we are told, had bequeathed their promissory notes to their children, used their reversionary interest in the loan in many ways; and these, of course, felt the change very heavily. No doubt: but why have we not a right to suppose that the Parliament were aware of that fact; but chose it as the less of the two evils? The King had spent the money; he was unable to recover it from Francis, could only refund it by raising some fresh tax or benevolence: and why may not the Parliament have considered the release of old taxes likely to offend fewer people than the imposition of new ones? It is, certainly, an ugly thing to break public faith; but to prove that public faith was broken, we must prove that Henry compelled the Parliament to release him; if the act was of their own free will, no public faith was broken, for they were the representatives of the nation, and through them, the nation forgave its own debt. And what evidence have we that they did not represent the nation, and that, on the whole, we must suppose, as we should in the case of any other men, that they best knew their own business? May we not apply to this

case, and to others, mutatis mutandis, the argument which Mr. Froude uses so boldly and well in the case of Anne Boleyn's trial—'The English nation, also, as well as . . . . deserves justice at our hands?'

Certainly it does: but it is a disagreeable token of the method on which we have been accustomed to write the history of our own forefathers, that Mr. Froude should find it necessary to state formally so very simple a truth.

What proof, we ask again, is there that this old Parliament was 'servile?' Had that been so, Wolsey would not have been afraid to summon it. The specific reason for not summoning a Parliament for six years after that of 1524, was, that they were not servile; that when (here we are quoting Mr. Hallam, and not Mr. Froude) Wolsey entered the House of Commons with a great train, seemingly for the purpose of intimidation, they 'made no other answer to his harangues, than that it was their usage to debate only among themselves.' The debates on this occasion lasted fifteen or sixteen days, during which, says an eye-witness, 'there has been the greatest and sorest hold in the Lower House,' 'the matter debated and beaten;' 'such hold that the House was like to have been dissevered;' in a word, hard fighting (and why not honest fighting?) between the court party and the opposition, 'which ended,' says Mr. Hallam, 'in the court party obtaining, with the utmost difficulty, a grant much inferior to the Cardinal's original requisition.' What token of servility is here?

And is it reasonable to suppose, that after Wolsey was conquered, and a comparatively popular ministry had succeeded, and that memorable Parliament of 1529 (which Mr. Froude, not unjustly, thinks more memorable than the Long Parliament itself) began its

great work with a high hand, backed not merely by the King, but by the public opinion of the majority of England, their decisions are likely to have been more servile than before? If they resisted the King when they disagreed with him, are they to be accused of servility because they worked with him when they agreed with him? Is an opposition always in the right; a ministerial party always in the wrong? Is it an offence against the people to agree with the monarch, even when he agrees with the people himself? Simple as these questions are, one must really stop to ask them.

No doubt, pains were often taken to secure elections favourable to the Government. Are none taken now? Are not more taken now? Will any historian show us the documents which prove the existence, in the sixteenth century, of Reform Club, Carlton Club, whippers-in and nominees, governmental and opposition, and all the rest of the beautiful machinery which protects our Reformed Parliament from the evil influences of bribery and corruption? Pah!—We have somewhat too much glass in our modern House, to afford to throw stones at our forefathers' old St. Stephen's. At the worst, what was done then but that without which it is said to be impossible to carry on a government now? Take an instance from the Parliament of 1539, one in which there is no doubt Government influence was used, in order to prevent as much as possible the return of members favourable to the clergy—for the good reason, that the clergy were no doubt on their own side intimidating voters by all those terrors of the unseen world, which had so long been to them a source of boundless profit and power.

Cromwell writes to the King to say that he has secured a seat for a certain Sir Richard Morrison, but

for what purpose? As one who no doubt 'should be ready to answer and take up such as should crack or face with literature of learning, if any such should be.' There was, then, free discussion; they expected clever and learned speakers in the opposition, and on subjects of the deepest import, not merely political but spiritual; and the Government needed men to answer such. What more natural, than that so close on the 'Pilgrimage of Grace,' and in the midst of so great dangers, at home and abroad, the Government should have done their best to secure a well-disposed House (one would like to know when they would not)? But surely the very effort (confessedly exceptional), and the acknowledged difficulty, prove that Parliament were no mere 'registrars of edicts.'

But the strongest argument against the tyranny of the Tudors, and especially of Henry VIII., in his 'benevolences,' is derived from the state of the people themselves. If these benevolences had been really unpopular, they would not have been paid. In one case, we have seen, a benevolence was not paid for that very reason. For the method of the Tudor sovereigns, like that of their predecessors, was the very opposite to that of tyrants, in every age and country. The first act of a tyrant has always been to disarm the people, and to surround himself with a standing army. The Tudor method was, as Mr. Froude shows us by many interesting facts, to keep the people armed and drilled, even to compel them to learn the use of weapons. Throughout England spread one vast military organization, which made every adult a soldier, and enabled him to find, at a day's notice, his commanding officer, whether landlord, sheriff, or lieutenant of the county; so that, as a foreign ambassador of the time remarks with astonishment (we quote from memory), 'England

is the strongest nation on earth, for though the King has not a single mercenary soldier, he can raise in three days an army of two hundred thousand men.'

And of what temper those men were is well known enough. Mr. Froude calls them (and we beg leave to endorse, without exception, Mr. Froude's opinion) 'A sturdy high-hearted race, sound in body, and fierce in spirit, and furnished with thews and sinews, which under the stimulus of those 'great shins of beef,' their common diet, were the wonder of the age.' 'What comyn folke in all this world,' says a State Paper in 1515, 'may compare with the comyns of England in riches, freedom, liberty, welfare and all prosperity? What comyn folk is so mighty, so strong in the felde, as the comyns of England?' In stories of authentic actions under Henry VIII. (and we will add, under Elizabeth likewise), where the accuracy of the account is undeniable, no disparity of force made Englishmen shrink from enemies whenever they could meet them. Again and again a few thousands of them carried dismay into the heart of France. Four hundred adventurers, vagabond apprentices of London, who formed a volunteer corps in the Calais garrison, were for years (Hall says) the terror of Normandy. In the very frolic of conscious power they fought and plundered, without pay, without reward, save what they could win for themselves; and when they fell at last, they fell only when surrounded by six times their number, and were cut to pieces in careless desperation. Invariably, by friend and foe alike, the English are described as the fiercest people in all Europe (English wild beasts, Benvenuto Cellini calls them); and this great physical power they owed to the profuse abundance in which they lived, to the soldier's training, in which every one of them was bred from childhood.

Mr. Froude's novel assertion about profuse abundance must be weighed by those who have read his invaluable introductory chapter. But we must ask at once, how it was possible to levy on such an armed populace a tax which they were determined not to pay, and felt that they were not bound to pay, either in law or justice? Conceive Lord Palmerston's sending down to demand a 'benevolence' from the army at Aldershot, beginning with the general in command, and descending to the privates. . . . What would be the consequences? Ugly enough: but gentle in comparison with those of any attempt to exact a really unpopular tax from a nation of well-armed Englishmen, unless they, on the whole, thought the tax fit to be paid. They would grumble, of course, whether they intended to pay or not—for were they not Englishmen, our own flesh and blood?—and grumble all the more in person, because they had no press to grumble for them: but what is there then in the M.P.'s letter to Lord Surrey, quoted by Mr. Hallam, p. 25, or in the more pointed letter of Warham's, two pages on, which we do not see lying on our breakfast tables in half the newspapers every week? Poor, pedantic, obstructive, old Warham, himself very angry at so much being asked of his brother clergymen, and at their being sworn as to the value of their goods (so like are old times to new ones); and being, on the whole, of opinion, that the world (the Church included) is going to the devil, says that as he has been 'showed in a secret manner of his friends, the people sore grudgeth and murmureth, and speaketh cursedly among themselves, as far as they dare, saying they shall never have rest of payments as long as some liveth, and that they had better die than thus be continually handed, reckoning themselves, their wives

and children, as despoulit, and not greatly caring what they do, or what becomes of them.'

Very dreadful—if true: which last point depends very much upon who Warham was. Now, on reading Mr. Froude's, or any other good history, we shall find that Warham was one of the leaders of that despondent party which will always have its antitype in England. Have we, too, not heard within the last seven years, similar prophecies of desolation, mourning, and woe—of the Church tottering on the verge of ruin, the peasantry starving under the horrors of free-trade, noble families reduced to the verge of beggary by double income-tax? Even such a prophet seems Warham to have been—of all people in that day, one of the last whom one would have asked for an opinion.

Poor old Warham, however, was not so far wrong in this particular case; for the 'despoulit' slaves of Suffolk, not content with grumbling, rose up with sword and bow, and vowed that they would not pay. Whereon the bloated tyrant sent his prætorians, and enforced payment by scourge and thumbscrew? Not in the least. They would not pay; and, therefore, being free men, nobody could make them pay; and although in the neighbouring county of Norfolk, from twenty pounds (i.e., 200*l.* of our money) upward (the tax was not levied on men of less substance), there were not twenty but what had consented; and though there was 'great likelihood that this grant should be much more than the loan was' (the 'salt tears' shed by the gentlemen of Norfolk proceeding, says expressly the Duke of Norfolk, 'only from doubt how to find money to content the King's Highness'); the King and Wolsey gave way frankly and at once, and the contri-

bution was remitted, although the Dukes of Norfolk and Suffolk, writing to Wolsey, treat the insurrection lightly, and seem to object to the remission as needless.

From all which facts (they are Mr. Hallam's, not Mr. Froude's) we can deduce not tyranny, but lenity, good sense, and the frank withdrawal from a wrong position, as soon as the unwillingness of the people proved it to be a wrong one.

This instance is well brought forward (though only in a line or two, by Mr. Froude) as one among many proofs that the working-classes in Henry the Eighth's time 'enjoyed an abundance far beyond that which in general falls to the lot of that order in long-settled countries, incomparably beyond what the same class were enjoying at that very time in Germany or France. The laws secured them; and that the laws were put in force, we have the direct evidence of successive acts of the legislature, justifying the general policy by its success: and we have also the indirect evidence of the contented loyalty of the great body of the people, at a time when, if they had been discontented, they held in their own hands the means of asserting what the law acknowledged to be their right. The Government' (as we have just shown at length) 'had no power to compel injustice. . . . . If the peasantry had been suffering under any real grievances, we should have heard of them when the religious rebellions furnished so fair an opportunity to press them forward. Complaint was loud enough, when complaint was just, under the Somerset Protectorate.'

Such broad facts as these (for facts they are) ought to make us pause ere we boast of the greater liberty enjoyed by Englishmen of the present day, as compared

with the tyranny of Tudor times. Thank God, there is no lack of that blessing now; but was there any real lack of it then? Certainly the outward notes of a tyranny exist now in far greater completeness than then. A standing army, a Government police, ministries who bear no love to a militia, and would consider the compulsory arming and drilling of the people as a dangerous insanity, do not look at first sight as much like 'free institutions' as a Government which, though again and again in danger not merely of rebellion, but of internecine wars of succession, so trusted the people, as to force weapons into their hands from boyhood. Let us not be mistaken; we are no hankerers after retrogression; the present system works very well; let it be; all that we say is, that the imputation of despotic institutions lies, primâ facie, rather against the reign of Queen Victoria than against that of King Henry the Eighth. Of course, it is not so in fact. Many modern methods, which are despotic in appearance, are not so in practice. Let us believe that the same was the case in the sixteenth century. Our governors now understand their own business best, and make a very fair compromise between discipline and freedom. Let us believe that the men of the sixteenth century did so likewise. All we ask is, that our forefathers should be judged as we wish to be judged ourselves, 'not according to outward appearance, but with righteous judgment.'

Mr. Froude finds the cause of this general contentment and loyalty of the masses, in the extreme care which the Government took of their well-being. The introductory chapter, in which he proves to his own satisfaction the correctness of his opinion, is well worth the study of our political economists. The facts which

he brings seem certainly overwhelming; of course, they can only be met by counter-facts; and our knowledge does not enable us either to corroborate or refute his statements. The chief argument used against them seems to us, at least, to show, that for some cause or other, the working classes were prosperous enough. It is said the Acts of Parliament regulating wages do not fix the minimum of wages, but the maximum. They are not intended to defend the employed against the employer, but the employer against the employed, in a defective state of the labour-market, when the workmen, by the fewness of their numbers, were enabled to make extravagant demands. Let this be the case, (we do not say that it is so), what is it but a token of prosperity among the working classes? A labour market so thin that workmen can demand their own price for their labour, till Parliament is compelled to bring them to reason, is surely a time of prosperity to the employed,—a time of full work and high wages; of full stomachs, inclined from very prosperity to 'wax fat and kick.' If, however, any learned statistician should be able to advance, on the opposite side of the question, enough to weaken some of Mr. Froude's conclusions, he must still, if he be a just man, do honour to the noble morality of this most striking chapter, couched as it is in as perfect English as we have ever had the delight of reading. We shall leave, then, the battle of facts to be fought out by statisticians, always asking Mr. Froude's readers to bear in mind, that though other facts may be true, yet his facts are no less true likewise, and shall quote at length, both as a specimen of his manner and of his matter, the last three pages of this introductory chapter, in which, after speaking of the severity of the laws against vagrancy, and showing how they were excused by the organization which

found employment for every able-bodied man, he goes on to say,—

It was, therefore, the expressed conviction of the English nation, that it was better for a man not to live at all than to live a profitless and worthless life. The vagabond was a sore spot upon the commonwealth, to be healed by wholesome discipline if the gangrene was not incurable; to be cut away with the knife, if the milder treatment of the cart-whip failed to be of profit.

A measure so extreme in its severity was partly dictated by policy. The state of the country was critical; and the danger from questionable persons traversing it unexamined and uncontrolled was greater than at ordinary times. But in point of justice as well as of prudence, it harmonized with the iron temper of the age, and it answered well for the government of a fierce and powerful people, in whose hearts lay an intense hatred of rascality, and among whom no one could have lapsed into evil courses except by deliberate preference for them. The moral sinew of the English must have been strong indeed when it admitted of such stringent bracing; but, on the whole, they were ruled as they preferred to be ruled; and if wisdom can be tested by success, the manner in which they passed the great crisis of the Reformation is the best justification of their princes. The era was great throughout Europe. The Italians of the age of Michael Angelo; the Spaniards who were the contemporaries of Cortez; the Germans who shook off the Pope at the call of Luther; and the splendid chivalry of Francis I. of France, were no common men. But they were all brought face to face with the same trials, and none met them as the English met them. The English alone never lost their self-possession, and if they owed something to fortune in their escape from anarchy, they owed more to the strong hand and steady purpose of their rulers.

To conclude this chapter, then.

In the brief review of the system under which England was governed, we have seen a state of things in which the principles of political economy were, consciously or unconsciously, contradicted; where an attempt, more or less successful, was made to bring the production and distribution of wealth under the moral rule of right or wrong; and where those laws of supply and demand, which we are now taught to regard as immutable ordinances of nature, were absorbed or superseded by a higher code. It is necessary for me to repeat that I am not holding up the sixteenth century as a model which the nineteenth might safely follow. The population has become too large, and employment too complicated and fluctuating, to admit of such control; while, in default of control, the relapse upon self-interest as the one motive principle is certain to ensue, and, when it ensues, is absolute in its operations. But as, even with us, these so-called ordinances of nature in time of war consent to be suspended, and duty to his country becomes with every good citizen

a higher motive of action than the advantages which he may gain in an enemy's market; so it is not uncheering to look back upon a time when the nation was in a normal condition of militancy against social injustice,—when the Government was enabled, by happy circumstances, to pursue into detail a single and serious aim at the well-being—well-being in its widest sense—of all members of the commonwealth. There were difficulties and drawbacks at that time as well as this. Of Liberty, in the modern sense of the word,—of the supposed right of every man 'to do what he will with his own,' or with himself, there was no idea. To the question, if ever it was asked, 'May I not do what I will with my own?' there was the brief answer, 'No man may do what is wrong, either with what is his own, or with what is another's.' Producers, too, who were not permitted to drive down their workmen's wages by competition, could not sell their goods as cheaply as they might have done, and the consumer paid for the law in an advance of price; but the burden, though it fell heavily on the rich, lightly touched the poor; and the rich consented cheerfully to a tax which insured the loyalty of the people. The working man of modern times has bought the extension of his liberty at the price of his material comfort. The higher classes have gained in wealth what they have lost in power. It is not for the historian to balance advantages. His duty is with the facts.

Our forefathers, then, were not free, if we attach to that word the meaning which our Transatlantic brothers seem inclined to give to it. They had not learnt to deify self-will, and to claim for each member of the human race a right to the indulgence of every eccentricity. They called themselves free, and boasted of their freedom; but their conception of liberty was that of all old nations, a freedom which not only allowed of discipline, but which grew out of it. No people had less wish to exalt the kingly power into that specious tyranny, a paternal government; the king was with them, and always had been, both formally and really, subject to their choice; bound by many oaths to many duties: the minister, not the master of the people. But their whole conception of political life was, nevertheless, shaped by their conception of family life. Strict obedience, stern discipline, compulsory education in practical duties, was the law of the latter; without

such training they thought their sons could never become in any true sense men. And when they grew up, their civic life was to be conducted on the same principles, for the very purpose of enabling them to live as members of a free nation. 'If the self-will of the individual was curbed, now and then, needlessly (as it is the nature of all human methods to caricature themselves at times), the purpose was, not to weaken the man, but to strengthen him, by strengthening the body to which he belonged. The nation was to be free, self-helping, self-containing, unconquerable; to that great purpose the will, the fancy, even, if need be, the mortal life, of the individual must give way. Men must be trained at all costs in self-restraint, because only so could they become heroes in the day of danger; in self-sacrifice for the common good, because only so would they remain united, while foreign nations and evil home influences were trying to tear them asunder. In a word, their conception of life was as a warfare; their organization, that of a regiment. It is a question whether the conception of corporate life embodied in a regiment or army, be not, after all, the best working one for this world. At least the problem of a perfect society, howsoever beautiful on paper, will always issue in a compromise, more or less perfect (let us hope more and more perfect as the centuries roll on), between the strictness of military discipline, and the Irishman's laissez-faire ideal, wherein 'every man should do that which was right in the sight of his own eyes, and wrong too, if he liked.' At least, such had England been for centuries; under such a system had she thriven; a fact which, duly considered, should silence somewhat those gentlemen who (not being of a military turn themselves) inform Europe so patriotically and so prudently, that 'England is not a military nation.'

From this dogma we beg leave to differ utterly. Britain is at this moment, in our eyes, the only military nation in Europe. All other nations seem to us to have military governments, but not to be military themselves. As proof of the assertion, we appeal merely to the existence of our militia. While other nations are employing conscription, we have raised, in twelve months, a noble army, every soul of which has volunteered as a free man; and yet, forsooth, we are not a military nation! We are not ashamed to tell how, but the other day, standing in the rear of those militia regiments, no matter where, a flush of pride came over us at the sight of those lads, but a few months since helpless and awkward country boors, now full of sturdy intelligence, cheerful obedience, and the manhood which can afford to be respectful to others, because it respects itself, and knows that it is respected in turn. True, they had not the lightness, the order, the practical ease, the cunning self-helpfulness of the splendid German legionaries who stood beside them, the breast of every other private decorated with clasps and medals for service in the wars of seven years since. As an invading body, perhaps, one would have preferred the Germans; but only because experience had taught them already, what it would teach in twelve months to the Berkshire or Cambridge 'clod.' There, to us, was the true test of England's military qualities; her young men had come by tens of thousands, of their own free will, to be made soldiers of by her country gentlemen, and treated by them the while as men to be educated, not as things to be compelled; not driven like sheep to the slaughter, to be disciplined by men with whom they had no bond but the mere official one of military obedience; and 'What,' we asked ourselves, 'does England lack to make her a second Rome?

Her people have physical strength, animal courage, that self-dependence of freemen which enabled at Inkerman the privates to fight on literally without officers, every man for his own hand. She has inventive genius, enormous wealth: and if, as is said, her soldiers lack at present the self-helpfulness of the Zouave, it is ridiculous to suppose that that quality could long be wanting in the men of a nation which is at this moment the foremost in the work of emigration and colonization. If organizing power and military system be, as is said, lacking in high quarters, surely there must be organizing power enough somewhere, in the greatest industrial nation upon earth, ready to come forward, when there is a real demand for it; and, whatever be the defects of our system, we are surely not as far behind Prussia or France, as Rome was behind the Carthaginians and the Greeks whom she crushed. A few years sufficed for them to learn all they needed from their enemies; fewer still would suffice us to learn from our friends. Our working classes are not, like those of America, in a state of physical comfort too great to make it worth while for them to leave their home occupations; and whether that be a good or an evil, it at least insures us, as our militia proves, an almost inexhaustible supply of volunteers. What a new and awful scene for the world's drama, did such a nation as this once set before itself, steadily and ruthlessly, as Rome did of old, the idea of conquest. Even now, waging war as she has done, as it were, ἐν παρεργῳ, thinking war too unimportant a part of her work to employ on it her highest intellects, her flag has advanced in the last fifty years over more vast and richer tracts than that of any European nation upon earth. What keeps her from the dream which lured to their destruction Babylon, Macedonia, Rome?'

This: that, thank God, she has a conscience still; that feeling intensely the sacredness of her own national life, she has learned to look on that of other peoples as sacred also; and since, in the fifteenth century, she finally repented of that wild and unrighteous dream of conquering France, she has discovered more and more that true military greatness lies in the power of defence, and not of attack; not in waging war, but being able to wage it; and has gone on her true mission of replenishing the earth more peacefully, on the whole, and more humanely, than did ever nation before her, conquering only when it was necessary to put down the lawlessness of the savage few for the well-being of the civilized many. This has been her idea; she may have confused it and herself, in Caffre or in Chinese wars; for who can always be true to the light within him? But this has been her idea; and therefore she stands and grows and thrives, a virgin land for now eight hundred years.

But a fancy has come over us, during the last blessed forty years of unexampled peace, from which our ancestors of the sixteenth century were kept, by stern and yet most wholesome lessons; the fancy that peace, and not war, is the normal condition of the world. The fancy is so fair, that we blame none who cherish it; after all, they do good by cherishing it; they point us to an ideal which we should otherwise forget, as Babylon, Rome, France in the seventeenth century, forgot utterly. Only they are in haste (and pardonable haste too) to realize that ideal, forgetting that to do so would be really to stop short of it, and to rest contented in some form of human society, far lower than that which God has actually prepared for those who love him. Better to believe that all our conceptions of the height to which the human race might attain, are

poor and paltry compared with that toward which God is guiding it, and for which he is disciplining it by awful lessons: and to fight on, if need be, ruthless, and yet full of pity (and many a noble soul has learnt within the last two years how easy it is to reconcile in practice that seeming paradox of words), smiting down stoutly evil, wheresoever we shall find it, and saying, 'What ought to be, we know not; God alone can know: but that this ought not to be, we do know, and here, in God's name, it shall not stay.'

We repeat it: war, in some shape or other, is the normal condition of the world. It is a fearful fact: but we shall not abolish it by ignoring it, and ignoring by the same method the teaching of our Bibles. Not in mere metaphor does the gospel of Love describe the life of the individual good man as a perpetual warfare. Not in mere metaphor does the apostle of love see in his visions of the world's future no Arcadian shepherd paradises, not even a perfect civilization, but an eternal war in heaven, wrath and woe, plague and earthquake; and amid the everlasting storm, the voices of the saints beneath the altar, crying, 'Lord, how long?' Shall we pretend to have more tender hearts than the old man of Ephesus, whose dying sermon, so old legends say, was nought but—'Little children, love one another;' and yet could denounce the liar and the hater and the covetous man, and proclaim the vengeance of God against all evil-doers, with all the fierceness of an Isaiah? It was enough for him—let it be enough for us—that he should see, above the thunder-cloud, and the rain of blood, and the scorpion swarm, and the great angel calling all the fowl of heaven to the supper of the great God, that they might eat the flesh of kings and valiant men, a city of God eternal in the heavens, and yet eternally

descending among men; a perfect order, justice, love, and peace, becoming actual more and more in every age, through all the fearful training needful for a fallen race.

Let that be enough for us: but do not let us fancy that what is true of the two extremes, must not needs be true of the mean also; that while the life of the individual and of the universe is one of perpetual self-defence, the life of the nation can be aught else: or that any appliances of scientific comforts, any intellectual cultivation, even any the most direct and common-sense arguments of self-interest, can avail to quiet in man those outbursts of wrath, ambition, cupidity, wounded pride, which have periodically convulsed, and will convulse to the end, the human race. The philosopher in his study may prove their absurdity, their suicidal folly, till, deluded by the strange lull of a forty years' peace, he may look on wars as in the same category with flagellantisms, witch-manias, and other 'popular delusions;' as insanities of the past, impossible henceforth; and may prophesy, as really wise political economists were doing in 1847, that mankind had grown too sensible to go to war any more. And behold, the peace proves only to be the lull before the thunderstorm; and one electric shock sets free forces unsuspected, transcendental, supernatural in the deepest sense; forces which we can no more stop, by shrieks at their absurdity, from incarnating themselves in actual blood, and misery, and horror, than we can control the madman in his paroxysm, by telling him that he is a madman. And so the fair vision of the student is buried once more in rack and hail and driving storm; and, like Daniel of old, when rejoicing over the coming restoration of his people, he sees beyond the victory some darker struggle still, and lets his notes of triumph die away into a wail,

—'And the end thereof shall be with a flood; and to the end of the war desolations are determined.'

It is as impossible as it would be unwise, to conceal from ourselves the fact, that all the Continental nations look upon our present peace as but transitory, momentary; and on the Crimean war as but the prologue to a fearful drama—all the more fearful because none knows its purpose, its plot, which character will be assumed by any given actor, and, least of all, the dénouement of the whole. All that they feel and know is, that everything which has happened since 1848 has exasperated, not calmed, the electric tension of the European atmosphere; that a rottenness, rapidly growing intolerable alike 'to God and the enemies of God,' has eaten into the vitals of Continental life; that their rulers know neither where they are, nor whither they are going, and only pray that things may last out their time: all notes which one would interpret as proving the Continent to be already ripe for subjection to some one devouring race of conquerors, were there not a ray of hope in an expectation, even more painful to our human pity, which is held by some of the wisest among the Germans; namely, that the coming war will fast resolve into no struggle between bankrupt monarchs and their respective armies, but a war between nations themselves, an internecine war of opinions and of creeds. There are wise Germans now who prophesy, with sacred tears, a second 'thirty years' war' with all its frantic horrors, for their hapless country, which has found two centuries too short a time wherein to recover from the exhaustion of that first fearful scourge. Let us trust if that war shall beget its new Tillys and Wallensteins, it shall also beget its new Gustavus Adolphus, and many another child of Light: but let us not hope that we can stand by, in idle comfort, and that when

the overflowing scourge passes by, it shall not reach to us. Shame to us, were that our destiny. Shame to us, were we to refuse our share in the struggles of the human race, and to stand by in idle comfort, while the Lord's battles are being fought. Honour to us, if in that day, we have chosen for our leaders, as our forefathers of the sixteenth century did, men who see the work which God would have them do, and have hearts and heads to do it. Honour to us, if we spend this transient lull, as our forefathers of the sixteenth century did, in setting our house in order, in redressing every grievance, reforming every abuse, knitting the hearts of the British nation together by practical care and help between class and class, man and man, governor and governed, that we may bequeath to our children, as Henry the Eighth's men did to theirs, a British national life, so united and whole-hearted, so clear in purpose, and sturdy in execution, so trained to know the right side at the first glance, and take it, that they shall look back with love and honour upon us, their fathers, determined to carry out, even to the death, the method which we have bequeathed to them. Then, if God will that the powers of evil, physical and spiritual, should combine against this land, as they did in the days of good Queen Bess, we shall not have lived in vain; for those who, as in Queen Bess's days, thought to yoke for their own use a labouring ox, will find, as then, that they have roused a lion from his den.

PLAYS AND PURITANS.*

THE British isles have been ringing, for the last few years, with the word 'Art,' in its German sense, with 'High Art,' 'Symbolic Art,' 'Ecclesiastical Art,' 'Dramatic Art,' 'Tragic Art,' and so forth; and every well-educated person is expected, now-a-days, to know something about Art. Meanwhile, in spite of all translations of German 'Æsthetic' treatises, and 'Kunstnovellen,' the mass of the British people cares very little about the matter, and sits contented under the imputation of 'bad taste.' Our stage, long since dead, does not revive; our poetry is dying; our music, like our architecture, only reproduces the past; our painting is only good when it handles landscapes and animals, and seems likely so to remain: but, meanwhile, nobody cares.

* The North British Review, No. XLIX.—1. 'Works of Beaumont and Fletcher.' London, 1679.—2. 'Works of Ben Jonson.' London, 1692.—3. 'Massinger's Plays.' Edited by William Gifford, Esq. London, 1813.—4. 'Works of John Webster.' Edited, &c., by Rev. Alexander Dyce. Pickering, London, 1830.—5. 'Works of James Shirley.' Edited by Rev. A. Dyce. Murray, 1833.—6. 'Works of T. Middleton.' Edited by Rev. A. Dyce. Lumley, 1840.—7. 'Comedies,' &c. By Mr. William Cartwright. London, 1651.—8. 'Specimens of English Dramatic Poets.' By Charles Lamb. Longmans & Co., 1808.—9. 'Histriomastix.' By W. Prynne, Utter-Barrister of Lincoln's Inn. London, 1633.—10. 'Northbrooke's Treatise against Plays,' &c. (Shakspeare Soc.) 1843.—11. 'The Works of Bishop Hall.' Oxford, 1839.—12. 'Marston's Satires.' London, 1600.—13. 'Jeremy Collier's Short View of the Profaneness, &c., of the English Stage.' London, 1730.—14. 'Langbaine's English Dramatists.' Oxford, 1691.—15. 'Companion to the Playhouse.' London, 1764.—16. 'Riccoboni's Account of the Theatres in Europe.' 1741.

Some of the deepest and most earnest minds vote the question, in general, a 'sham and a snare,' and whisper to each other confidentially, that Gothic art is beginning to be a 'bore,' and that Sir Christopher Wren was a very good fellow after all; while the middle classes look on the Art movement half amused, as with a pretty toy, half sulkily suspicious of Popery and Paganism; and think, apparently, that Art is very well when it means nothing, and is merely used to beautify drawing-rooms and shawl patterns; not to mention that, if there were no painters, Mr. Smith could not hand down to posterity likenesses of himself, Mrs. Smith, and family. But when 'Art' dares to be in earnesst, and to mean something, much more to connect itself with religion, Smith's tone alters. He will teach 'Art' to keep in what he considers its place, and if it refuses, take the law of it, and put it into the Ecclesiastical Court. So he says, and what is more, he means what he says; and as all the world, from Hindostan to Canada, knows by most practical proof, what he means, he sooner or later does, perhaps not always in the wisest way, but still he does it.

Thus, in fact, the temper of the British nation toward 'Art,' is simply that of the old Puritans, softened, no doubt, and widened; but only enough so as to permit Art, not to encourage it.

Some men's thoughts on this curious fact would probably take the form of some æsthetic à priori disquisition, beginning with 'the tendency of the infinite to reveal itself in the finite,' and ending—who can tell where? But as we cannot honestly arrogate to ourselves any skill in the scientia scientiarum, or say, 'The Lord possessed me in the beginning of His way, before his works of old. When He prepared the

Heavens, I was there, when he set a compass upon the face of the deep;' we shall leave æsthetic science to those who think that they comprehend it; we will, as simple disciples of Bacon, deal with facts and with history as 'the will of God revealed in facts.' We will leave those who choose to settle what ought to be, and ourselves look patiently at that which actually was once, and which may be again; that so out of the conduct of our old Puritan forefathers (right or wrong), and their long war against 'Art,' we may learn a wholesome lesson; as we doubtless shall, if we will believe firmly that our history is neither more nor less than what the old Hebrew prophets called 'God's gracious dealings with His people,' and not say in our hearts, like some sentimental girl who sings Jacobite ballads (written forty years ago by men who cared no more for the Stuarts than for the Ptolemies, and were ready to kiss the dust off George the Fourth's feet at his visit to Edinburgh)—'Victrix causa Diis placuit, sed victa puellis.'

The historian of a time of change has always a difficult and invidious task. For Revolutions, in the great majority of cases, arise not merely from the crimes of a few great men, but from a general viciousness and decay of the whole, or the majority of the nation; and that viciousness is certain to be made up, in great part, of a loosening of domestic ties, of breaches of the Seventh Commandment, and of sins connected with them, which a writer is now hardly permitted to mention. An 'evil and adulterous generation' has been in all ages and countries the one marked out for intestine and internecine strife. That description is always applicable to a revolutionary generation, whether or not it also comes under the class of a superstitious one,

'seeking after a sign from heaven,' only half believing its own creed, and, therefore, on tiptoe for miraculous confirmations of it, at the same time that it fiercely persecutes any one who, by attempting innovation or reform, seems about to snatch from weak faith the last plank which keeps it from sinking into the abyss. In describing such an age, the historian lies under this paradoxical disadvantage, that his case is actually too strong for him to state it. If he tells the whole truth, the easy-going and respectable multitude, in easy-going and respectable days like these, will either shut their ears prudishly to his painful facts, or reject them as incredible, unaccustomed as they are to find similar horrors and abominations among people of their own rank, of whom they are naturally inclined to judge by their own standard of civilization. Thus if any one, in justification of the Reformation, and the British hatred of Popery during the sixteenth century, should dare to detail the undoubted facts of the Inquisition, and to comment on them dramatically enough to make his readers feel about them what men who witnessed them felt, he would be accused of a 'morbid love of horrors.' If any one, in order to show how the French Revolution of 1793 was really God's judgment on the profligacy of the ancien régime, were to paint that profligacy as the men of the ancien régime unblushingly painted it themselves, respectability would have a right to demand, 'How dare you, sir, drag such disgusting facts from their merited oblivion?' Those, again, who are really acquainted with the history of Henry the Eighth's marriages, are well aware of facts which prove him to have been, not a man of violent and lawless passions, but of a cold temperament and a scrupulous conscience; but they cannot be stated in print, save in the most delicate and passing hints, which will be taken

only by those who at once understand such matters, and really wish to know the truth; while young ladies in general will still look on Henry as the monster in human form, because no one dares, or indeed ought, to undeceive them by anything beyond bare assertion without proof.

'But what does it matter,' some one may say, 'what young ladies think about history?' This it matters; that these young ladies will some day be mothers, and as such will teach their children their own notions of modern history; and that, as long as men confine themselves to the teaching of Roman and Greek history, and leave the history of their own country to be handled exclusively by their unmarried sisters, so long will slanders, superstitions, and false political principles be perpetuated in the minds of our boys and girls.

But a still worse evil arises from the fact that the historian's case is often too strong to be stated. There is always a reactionary party, or one at least which lingers sentimentally over the dream of past golden ages, such as that one of which Cowley says, with a sort of naïve blasphemy, at which one knows not whether to smile or sigh,—

> When God, the cause to me and men unknown,
> Forsook the royal houses, and his own.

These have full liberty to say all they can in praise of the defeated system; but the historian has no such liberty to state the case against it. If he even asserts that he has counter-facts, but dare not state them, he is at once met with a præjudicium. The mere fact of his having ascertained the truth is imputed as a blame to him, in a sort of prudish cant. 'What a very improper person he must be to like to dabble in such improper books that they must not even be quoted.' If in self-defence he desperately gives his

facts, he only increases the feeling against him, whilst the reactionists, hiding their blushing faces, find in their modesty an excuse for avoiding the truth; if, on the other hand, he content himself with bare assertion, and indicating the sources from whence his conclusions are drawn, what care the reactionists? They know well that the public will not take the trouble to consult manuscripts, State Papers, pamphlets, rare biographies, but will content themselves with ready-made history from the pen of Hume or Clarendon, Fraser Tytler, or Miss Strickland; and they therefore go on unblushing to republish their old romance, leaving poor truth, after she has been painfully haled up to the well's mouth, to tumble miserably to the bottom of it again.

In the face of this danger, we will go on to lay as much as we dare of the great cause, Puritans *v.* Players, before our readers, trusting to find some of them at least sufficiently unacquainted with the common notions on the point, to form a fair decision.

What those notions are, is well known. Very many of her Majesty's subjects are now of opinion that the first half of the seventeenth century (if the Puritans had not interfered and spoilt all), was the most beautiful period of the English nation's life; that in it the chivalry and ardent piety of the Middle Age were happily combined with modern art and civilization; that the Puritan hatred of the Court, of stage-plays, of the fashions of the time, was only 'a scrupulous and fantastical niceness,' barbaric and tasteless, if sincere; if insincere, the basest hypocrisy; that the stage-plays, though coarse, were no worse than Shakspeare, whom everybody reads; and that if the Stuarts patronized the stage they also raised it, and exercised a purifying censorship. And very many more who do not go all

these lengths with the reactionists, and cannot make up their mind to look to the Stuart reigns either for model churchmen or model courtiers, are still inclined to sneer with Walter Scott at the Puritan 'preciseness;' and to say lazily, that though, of course, something may have been wrong, yet there was no need to make such a fuss about the matter; and that at all events the Puritans were men of very bad taste.

Mr. Gifford, in his introduction to Massinger's Plays (1813), was probably the spokesman of his own generation, certainly of a great part of this generation also, when he informs us, that 'with Massinger terminated the triumph of dramatic poetry; indeed, the stage itself survived him but a short time. The nation was convulsed to its centre by contending factions, and a set of austere and gloomy fanatics, enemies to every elegant amusement, and every social relaxation, rose upon the ruins of the State. Exasperated by the ridicule with which they had long been covered by the stage, they persecuted the actors with unrelenting severity, and consigned them, together with the writers, to hopeless obscurity and wretchedness. Taylor died in the extreme of poverty, Shirley opened a little school at Brentford, and Downe, the boast of the stage, kept an ale-house at Brentford. Others, and those the far greater number, joined the royal standard, and exerted themselves with more gallantry than good fortune in the service of their old and indulgent master.

We have not yet, perhaps, fully estimated, and certainly not yet fully recovered, what was lost in that unfortunate struggle. The arts were rapidly advancing to perfection under the fostering wing of a monarch who united in himself taste to feel, spirit to undertake, and munificence to reward. Architecture, painting, and poetry, were by turns the objects of his paternal care. Shakspeare was his 'closet companion,' Jonson his poet, and in conjunction with Inigo Jones, his favoured architect, produced those magnificent entertainments, &c.

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He then goes on to account for the supposed sudden fall of dramatic art at the Restoration, by the somewhat far-fetched theory that—

> Such was the horror created in the general mind by the perverse and unsocial government from which they had so fortunately escaped, that the people appear to have anxiously avoided all retrospect, and, with Prynne and Vicars, to have lost sight of Shakspeare and 'his fellows.' Instead, therefore, of taking up dramatic poetry where it abruptly ceased in the labours of Massinger, they elicited, as it were, a manner of their own, or fetched it from the heavy monotony of their continental neighbours.

So is history written, and, what is more, believed. The amount of misrepresentation in this passage (which would probably pass current with most readers in the present day) is quite ludicrous. In the first place, it will hardly be believed, that these words occur in an essay, which, after extolling Massinger as one of the greatest poets of his age, second, indeed, only to Shakspeare, also informs us (and, it seems, quite truly), that so far from having been really appreciated or patronized, he maintained a constant struggle with adversity,—'that even the bounty of his particular friends, on which he chiefly relied, left him in a state of absolute dependence,'—that while 'other writers for the stage had their periods of good fortune, Massinger seems to have enjoyed no gleam of sunshine; his life was all one misty day, and 'shadows, clouds, and darkness rested on it.'

So much for Charles's patronage of a really great poet. What sort of men he did patronize, practically and in earnest, we shall see hereafter, when we come to speak of Mr. Shirley.

But Mr. Gifford must needs give an instance to prove that Charles was 'not inattentive to the success of Massinger,' and a curious one it is; of the same class, unfortunately, as that with the man in the old story, who recorded with pride that the King had

spoken to him, and—had told him to get out of the way.

Massinger in his 'King and the Subject' had introduced Don Pedro of Spain thus speaking—

> Monies! We'll raise supplies which way we please,
> And force you to subscribe to blanks, in which
> We'll mulct you as we shall think fit. The Cæsars
> In Rome were wise, acknowledging no law
> But what their swords did ratify, the wives
> And daughters of the senators bowing to
> Their will, as deities, &c.

Against which passage, Charles, reading over the play before he allowed of it, had written, 'This is too insolent, and not to be printed.' Too insolent it certainly was, considering the state of public matters in the year 1638. It would be interesting enough to analyse the reasons which made Charles dislike in the mouth of Pedro sentiments so very like his own; but we must proceed, only pointing out the way in which men determined to repeat the traditional clap-trap about the Stuarts, are actually blind to the meaning of the very facts which they themselves quote.

Where, then, do the facts of history contradict Mr. Gifford?

We believe that so far from the triumph of dramatic poetry terminating with Massinger, dramatic art had been steadily growing worse from the first years of James; that instead of the arts advancing to perfection under Charles the First, they steadily deteriorated in quality, though the supply became more abundant; that so far from there having been a sudden change for the worse in the drama after the Restoration, the taste of Charles the First's, and of Charles the Second's court, are indistinguishable; that the court poets, and probably the actors also, of the early part of Charles the Second's reign, had many of them belonged to the court of Charles the First, as did Davenant, the Duke and

Duchess of Newcastle, Fanshaw, and Shirley himself; that the common notion of a 'new manner' having been introduced from France, after the Restoration, or indeed, having come in at all, is not founded on fact, the only change being that the plays of Charles the Second's time were somewhat more stupid, and that while five of the seven deadly sins had always had free license on the stage, blasphemy and profane swearing were now enfranchised to fill up the seven. As for the assertion that the new manner (supposing it to have existed) was imported from France, there is far more reason to believe that the French copied us than we them, and that, if they did not learn from Charles the First's poets the superstition of 'the three unities,' they at least learnt to make ancient kings and heroes talk and act like seventeenth century courtiers, and to exchange their old clumsy masques and translations of Italian and Spanish farces for a comedy depicting native scoundrelism. Probably enough, indeed, the great and sudden development of the French stage, which took place in the middle of the seventeenth century, under Corneille and Molière, was excited by the English cavalier playwrights who took refuge in France.

No doubt, as Mr. Gifford says, the Puritans were exasperated against the stage-players by the insults heaped on them: but the cause of quarrel lay far deeper than any such personal soreness. The Puritans had attacked the players before the players meddled with them, and that on principle; with what justification must be considered hereafter. But the fact is (and this seems to have been, like many other facts, conveniently forgotten), that the Puritans were by no means alone in their protest against the stage, and that the war was not begun exclusively by them. As early as the latter half of the sixteenth century, not merely Northbrooke, Gosson, Stubs, and Reynolds, had lifted up their voices

against them, but Archbishop Parker, Bishop Babington, Bishop Hall, and the author of the 'Mirror for Magistrates.' The University of Oxford, in 1584, had passed a statute forbidding common plays and players in the university, on the very same moral grounds on which the Puritans objected to them. The city of London, in 1580, had obtained from the queen the suppression of plays on Sunday; and not long after, 'considering that play-houses and dicing-houses were traps for young gentlemen and others,' obtained leave from the queen and privy council to thrust the players out of the city, and to pull down the playhouses, five in number; and, paradoxical as it may seem, there is little doubt that, by the letter of the law, 'stage-plays and enterludes' were, even to the end of Charles the First's reign, 'unlawful pastime,' being forbidden by 14 Eliz., 39 Eliz., 1 Jacobi, 3 Jacobi, and 1 Caroli, and the players subject to severe punishment as 'rogues and vagabonds.' The Act of 1 Jacobi seems even to have gone so far as to repeal the clauses which, in Elizabeth's reign, had allowed companies of players the protection of a 'baron or honourable person of greater degree,' who might 'authorize them to play under his hand and seal of arms.' So that the Puritans were only demanding of the sovereigns that they should enforce the very laws which they themselves had made, and which they and their nobles were setting at defiance. Whether the plays ought to have been put down, and whether the laws were necessary, is a different question: but certainly the court and the aristocracy stood in the questionable, though too common, position of men who made laws to prohibit to the poor amusements in which they themselves indulged without restraint.

But were these plays objectionable? As far as the comedies are concerned, that will depend on the answer to the question, Are plays objectionable, the staple

subject of which is adultery? Now, we cannot but agree with the Puritans, that adultery is not a subject for comedy at all. It may be for tragedy; but for comedy never. It is a sin; not merely theologically, but socially, one of the very worst sins, the parent of seven other sins,—of falsehood, suspicion, hate, murder, and a whole bevy of devils. The prevalence of adultery in any country has always been a sign and a cause of social insincerity, division, and revolution; and where a people has learnt to connive and laugh at it, and to treat it as a light thing, that people has been always careless, base, selfish, cowardly,—ripe for slavery. And we must say, that either the courtiers and Londoners of James and Charles the First were in that state, or that the poets were doing their best to make them so.

We shall not shock our readers by any disgusting details on this point; we shall only say, that there is hardly a comedy of the seventeenth century, with the exception of Shakspeare's, in which adultery is not introduced as a subject of laughter, and often made the staple of the whole plot. The seducer is, if not openly applauded, at least let to pass as a 'handsome gentleman;' the injured husband is, as in that Italian literature of which we shall speak shortly, the object of every kind of scorn and ridicule. In this latter habit (common to most European nations) there is a sort of justice. A man can generally retain his wife's affections if he will behave himself like a man, and 'injured husbands' have for the most part no one to blame but themselves. But the matter is not a subject for comedy; not even in that case which has been always too common in France, Italy, and the Romish countries, and which seems to have been painfully common in England in the seventeenth century, when, by a 'mariage de convenance,' a young girl is married up

to a rich idiot or a decrepit old man. Such things are not comedies, but tragedies; subjects for pity and for silence, not for brutal ribaldry. Therefore the men who look on them in the light which the Stuart dramatists did are not good men, and do no good service to the country; especially when they erect adultery into a science, and seem to take a perverse pleasure in teaching their audience every possible method, accident, cause, and consequence of it; always, too, when they have an opportunity, pointing 'Eastward Ho!' i.e., to the city of London, as the quarter where court gallants can find boundless indulgence for their passions amid the fair wives of dull and cowardly citizens. If the citizens drove the players out of London, the playwrights took good care to have their revenge. The citizen is their standard butt. These shallow parasites, and their shallower sovereigns, seem to have taken a perverse, and, as it happened, a fatal pleasure, in insulting them. Sad it is to see in Shirley's 'Gamester,' Charles the First's favourite play, a passage like that in Act i. Scene 1, where old Barnacle proclaims, unblushing, his own shame and that of his fellow-merchants. Surely, if Charles ever could have repented of any act of his own, he must have repented, in many a humiliating after-passage with that same city of London, of having given those base words his royal warrant and approbation.

The tragedies of the seventeenth century are, on the whole, as questionable as the comedies. That there are noble plays among them here and there, no one denies—no more than that there are exquisitely amusing plays among the comedies; but as the staple interest of the comedies is dirt, so the staple interest of the tragedies is crime. Revenge, hatred, villany, incest, and murder upon murder, are their constant themes, and (with the exception of Shakspeare, Ben

Jonson in his earlier plays, and perhaps Massinger) they handle these horrors with little or no moral purpose, save that of exciting and amusing the audience, and of displaying their own power of delineation, in a way which makes one but too ready to believe the accusations of the Puritans (supported as they are by many ugly anecdotes), that the play-writers and actors were mostly men of fierce and reckless lives, who had but too practical an acquaintance with the dark passions which they sketch. This is notoriously the case with most of the French novelists of the modern 'Literature of Horror,' and the two literatures are morally identical. We do not know of a complaint which can be justly brought against the School of Balzac and Dumas, which will not equally apply to the average tragedy of the whole period preceding the civil wars.

This public appetite for horrors, for which they catered so greedily, tempted them toward another mistake, which brought upon them (and not undeservedly) heavy odium.

One of the worst counts against Dramatic Art (as well as against Pictorial), was the simple fact that it came from Italy. We must fairly put ourselves into the position of an honest Englishman of the seventeenth century, before we can appreciate the huge præjudicium which must needs arise in his mind against anything which could claim a Transalpine parentage. Italy was then not merely the stronghold of Popery,—though that in itself would have been a fair reason for others beside Puritans saying, 'If the root be corrupt, the fruit will be also; any expression of Italian thought and feeling must be probably unwholesome, while her vitals are being eaten out by an abominable falsehood, only half believed by the masses, and

not believed at all by the higher classes even of the priesthood, but only kept up for their private aggrandizement.' But there was more than hypothesis in favour of the man who might say this; there was universal, notorious, shocking fact. It was a fact that Italy was the centre where sins were invented worthy of the doom of the Cities of the Plain, and from whence they spread to all nations who had connexion with her. We dare give no proof of this assertion. The Italian morals and the Italian lighter literature of the sixteenth and of the beginning of the seventeenth century were such, that one is almost ashamed to confess that one has looked into them, although the painful task is absolutely necessary for one who wishes to understand either the European society of the time or the Puritan hatred of the drama. Non ragionam di lor: ma guarda è passa.

It is equally a fact, that these vices were imported into England by the young men who, under pretence of learning the Italian polish, travelled to Italy. From the days of Gabriel Harvey and Lord Oxford, about the middle of Elizabeth's reign, this foul tide had begun to set toward England, gaining an additional coarseness and frivolity in passing through the French Court (then an utter Gehenna) in its course hitherward; till, to judge by Marston's Satires, certain members of the higher classes had, by the beginning of James's reign, learnt nearly all which the Italians had to teach them. Marston writes in a rage, it is true,—foaming, stamping, and vapouring too much to escape the suspicion of exaggeration; yet he dared not have published the things which he does, had he not fair ground for some at least of his assertions. And Marston, be it remembered, was no Puritan, but a playwright, and Ben Jonson's friend.

Bishop Hall, in his Satires, describes things bad

enough, though not so bad as Marston does: but what is even more to the purpose, he wrote, and dedicated to James, a long dissuasive against the fashion of running abroad. Whatever may be thought of the arguments of 'Quo vadis?—a Censure of Travel,' its main drift is clear enough. Young gentlemen, by going to Italy, learnt to be fops and profligates, and probably Papists into the bargain. These assertions there is no denying. Since the days of Lord Oxford, most of the ridiculous and expensive fashions in dress had come from Italy, as well as the newest modes of sin; and the playwrights themselves make no secret of the fact. There is no need to quote instances; they are innumerable, and the stronger ones are not fit to be quoted, scarcely the titles of the plays in which they occur; but they justify almost every line of Bishop Hall's fierce questions (of which some of the strongest expressions have necessarily been omitted) :—

What mischief have we among us which we have not borrowed? To begin at our skin: who knows not whence we had the variety of our vain disguises? As if we had not wit enough to be foolish unless we were taught it. These dresses being constant in their mutability, show us our masters. What is it that we have not learned of our neighbours, save only to be proud good-cheap? whom would it not vex, to see how that the other sex hath learned to make anticks and monsters of themselves? Whence come their (absurd fashions;) but the one from some ill-shaped dame of France, the other from the worse-minded courtezans of Italy? Whence else learned they to daub these mud-walls with apothecaries' mortar; and those high washes, which are so cunningly licked on, that the wet napkin of Phryne should be deceived? Whence the frizzled and powdered bushes of their borrowed excrement? As if they were ashamed of the head of God's making, and proud of the tire-woman's. Where learned we that devilish art and practice of duel, wherein men seek honour in blood, and are taught the ambition of being glorious butchers of men? Where had we that luxurious delicacy in our feasts, in which the nose is no less pleased than the palate, and the eye no less than either? wherein the piles of dishes make barricadoes against the appetite, and with a pleasing encumbrance trouble a hungry guest. Where those forms of ceremonious quaffing, in which men have learned to make gods of others and

beasts of themselves, and lose their reason while they pretend to do reason? Where the lawlessness (miscalled freedom) of a wild tongue, that runs, with reins on the neck, through the bed-chambers of princes, their closets, their council tables, and spares not the very cabinet of their breasts, much less can be barred out of the most retired secresy of inferior greatness? Where, the change of noble attendance and hospitality into four wheels and some few butterflies? Where, the art of dishonesty in practical Machiavelism, in false equivocations? Where, the slight account of that filthiness, which is but condemned as venial, and tolerated as not unnecessary? Where, the skill of civil and honourable hypocrisy, in those formal compliments, which do neither expect belief from others, nor carry any from ourselves? Where (and here Bishop Hall begins to speak concerning things on which we must be silent, as of matters notorious and undeniable). Where, that close Atheism, which secretly laughs God in the face, and thinks it weakness to believe, wisdom to profess any religion? Where the bloody and tragical science of king-killing, the new divinity of disobedience and rebellion? with too many other evils, wherewith foreign conversation hath endangered the infection of our peace?—Bishop Hall's 'Quo Vadis, or a Censure of Travel,' vol. xii. sect. 22.

Add to these a third plain fact, that Italy was the mother-country of the drama, where it had thriven with wonderful fertility, ever since the beginning of the sixteenth century. However much truth there may be in the common assertion, that the old 'miracle plays' and 'mysteries' were the parents of the English drama (as they certainly were of the Spanish and the Italian), we have yet to learn how much our stage owed, from its first rise under Elizabeth, to direct importations from Italy. This is merely thrown out as a suggestion; to establish the fact would require a wide acquaintance with the early Italian drama; meanwhile, let two patent facts have their due weight. The names of the characters in most of our early regular comedies are Italian; so are the scenes, and so, one hopes, are the manners; at least they profess to be so. Next, the plots of many of the dramas are notoriously taken from the Italian novelists; and if Shakspeare (who had a truly divine instinct for finding honey where others found poison) went to Cinthio for 'Othello' and 'Mea-

sure for Measure,' to Bandello for 'Romeo and Julict,' and to Boccaccio for 'Cymbeline,' there were plenty of other playwrights who would go to the same sources for worse matter, or at least catch from these profligate writers somewhat of their Italian morality, which exalts adultery into a virtue, seduction into a science, and revenge into a duty; which revels in the horrible as freely as any French novelist of the romantic school; and whose only value is its pitiless exposure of the profligacy of the Romish priesthood: if an exposure can be valuable which makes a mock equally of things truly and falsely sacred, and leaves on the reader's mind the fear that the writer saw nothing in heaven or earth worthy of belief, respect, or self-sacrifice, save personal enjoyment.

Now this is the morality of the Italian novelists; and to judge from their vivid sketches (which, they do not scruple to assert, were drawn from life, and for which they unblushingly give names, places, and all details which might amuse the noble gentlemen and ladies to whom these stories are dedicated), this had been the morality of Italy for some centuries past. This, also, is the general morality of the English stage in the seventeenth century. Can we wonder that thinking men should have seen a connexion between Italy and the stage? Certainly the playwrights put themselves between the horns of an ugly dilemma. Either the vices which they depicted were those of general English society, and of themselves also (for they lived in the very heart of town and court foppery); or else they were the vices of a foreign country, with which the English were comparatively unacquainted. In the first case, we can only say, that the Stuart age in England was one which deserved purgation of the most terrible kind, and to get rid of which the severest and most

abnormal measures would have been not only justifiable, but to judge by the experience of all history, necessary; for extraordinary diseases never have been, and never will be, eradicated save by extraordinary medicines. In the second case, the playwrights were wantonly defiling the minds of the people, and instead of 'holding up a mirror to vice,' instructing frail virtue in vices which she had not learned, and fully justifying old Prynne's indignant complaint:—

> The acting of foreign, obsolete, and long since forgotten villanies on the stage, is so far from working a detestation of them in the spectators' minds (who, perchance, were utterly ignorant of them, till they were acquainted with them at the play-house, and so needed no dehortation from them), that it often excites dangerous dunghill spirits, who have nothing in them for to make them eminent, to reduce them into practice, of purpose to perpetuate their spurious ill-serving memories to posterity, leastwise in some tragic interlude.

That Prynne spoke herein nought but sober sense, our own police reports will sufficiently prove. It is notorious that the representation, in our own days, of 'Tom and Jerry' and of 'Jack Sheppard,' did excite dozens of young lads to imitate the scoundrel heroes of those base dramas; and such must have been the effect of similar and worse representations in the Stuart age. No rational man will need the authority of Bishop Babington, Doctor Leighton, Archbishop Parker, Purchas, Sparkes, Reynolds, White, or any one else, Churchman or Puritan, prelate or 'penitent reclaimed play-poet' like Stephen Gosson, to convince him that, as they assert, citizens' wives (who are generally represented as the proper subjects for seduction)* 'have, even on their death-beds, with tears confest that they have received, at these spectacles, such evil infections as have turned their minds from chaste cogitations, and made them, of

* 'The Third Blast of Retreat from Plays and Theatres.' Penned by a Play-poet.

honest women, light huswives ; . . . have brought their husbands into contempt, their children into question, ... and their souls into the assault of a dangerous state ;' or that ' The devices of carrying and re-carrying letters by laundresses, practising with pedlars to transport their tokens by colorable means to sell their merchandise, and other kinds of policies to beguile fathers of their children, husbands of their wives, guardians of their wards, and masters of their servants, were aptly taught in these schools of abuse.'

The matter is simple enough. We should not allow these plays to be acted in our own day, because we know that they would produce their effects. We should call him a madman who allowed his daughters or his servants to see such representations. Why, in all fairness, were the Puritans wrong in condemning that which we now have absolutely forbidden?

We will go no further into the sickening details of the licentiousness of the old playhouses. Gosson, and his colleague the anonymous Penitent, assert them, as does Prynne, to have been not only schools but antechambers to houses of a worse kind, and that the lessons learned in the pit were only not practised also in the pit. What reason have we to doubt it, who know that till Mr. Macready commenced a practical reformation of this abuse, for which his name will be ever respected, our own comparatively purified stage was just the same? Let any one who remembers the saloons of Drury Lane and Covent Garden thirty years ago judge for himself what the accessories of the Globe or the Fortune must have been, in days when players were allowed to talk inside, as freely as the public behaved outside.

Not that the poets or the players had any conscious intention of demoralizing their hearers, any more than they had of correcting them. We will lay on them the blame of

no special 'malus animus;' but, at the same time, we must treat their fine words about 'holding a mirror up to vice,' and 'showing the age its own deformity,' as mere cant, which the men themselves must have spoken tongue in cheek. It was as much an insincere cant in those days as it was when, two generations later, Jeremy Collier exposed its impudent falsehood in the mouth of Congreve. If the poets had really intended to show vice its own deformity, they would have represented it (as Shakspeare always does) as punished, and not as triumphant. It is ridiculous to talk of moral purpose in works in which there is no moral justice. The only condition which can excuse the representation of evil is omitted. The simple fact is, that the poets wanted to draw a house; that this could most easily be done by the coarsest and most violent means; and that not being often able to find stories exciting enough, from their foulness or horror, in the past records of sober English society, they went to Italy and Spain for the violent passions and wild crimes of southern temperaments, excited, and yet left lawless, by a superstition believed in enough to darken and brutalize, but not enough to control, its victims. Romish countries, then as now, furnished that strange mixture of inward savagery with outward civilization, which is the immoral playwright's fittest material; because, while the inward savagery moves the passions of the audience, the outward civilization brings the character near enough to them to give them a likeness of themselves in their worst moments, such as no Mystery of Cain or Tragedy of Prometheus can give.

Does this seem too severe in the eyes of those who value the drama for its lessons in human nature? On that special point something must be said hereafter. Meanwhile hear one of the sixteenth century poets;

one who cannot be suspected of any leaning toward Puritanism; one who had as high notions of his vocation as any man; and one who so far fulfilled those notions as to become a dramatist inferior only to Shakspeare. Let Ben Jonson himself speak, and in his preface to 'Volpone,' tell us in his own noble prose, what he thought of the average morality of his contemporary playwrights:—

For if men will impartially and not asquint look toward the offices and functions of a poet, they will easily conclude to themselves the impossibility of any man's being a good poet without first being a good man. He that is said to be able to inform young men to all good discipline, inflame grown men to all great virtues, keep old men in their best and supreme state, or, as they decline to childhood, recover them to their first strength; that comes forth the interpreter and arbiter of nature, a teacher of things divine no less than human, a master in manners; and can alone (or with a few) effect the business of mankind; this, I take him, is no subject for pride and ignorance to exercise their railing rhetoric upon. But it will here be hastily answered, that the writers of these days are other things, that not only their manners but their natures are inverted, and nothing remaining of them of the dignity of poet but the abused name, which every scribe usurps; that now, especially in dramatick, or (as they term it) stage poetry, nothing but ribaldry, profanation, blasphemies, all licence of offence toward God and man is practised. I dare not deny a great part of this (and I am sorry I dare not), because in some men's abortive features (and would God they had never seen the light) it is over true; but that all are bound on his bold adventure for hell, is a most uncharitable thought, and uttered, a more malicious slander. For every particular I can (and from a most clear conscience) affirm, that I have ever trembled to think toward the least profaneness, and have loathed the use of such foul and unwashed . . . [his expression is too strong for quotation] as is now made the food of the scene.

It is a pity to curtail this splendid passage, both for its lofty ideal of poetry, and for its corroboration of the Puritan complaints against the stage: but a few lines on a still stronger sentence occurs,—

The increase of which lust in liberty, together with the present trade of the stage, in all their masculine interludes, what liberal soul doth not abhor? Where nothing but filth of the mire is uttered, and that with such impropriety of phrase, such plenty of solecisms, such dearth of sense, so bold prolepses, such racked metaphors, with

(indecency) able to violate the ear of a Pagan, and blasphemy to turn the blood of a Christian to water.

So speaks Ben Jonson in 1605, not finding, it seems, play-writing a peaceful trade, or play-poets and play-hearers improving company. After him, we should say, no farther testimony on this unpleasant matter ought to be necessary. He may have been morose, fanatical, exaggerative: but his bitter words suggest at least this dilemma. Either they are true, and the play-house atmosphere (as Prynne says it was) that of Gehenna: or they are untrue, and the mere fruits of spite and envy against more successful poets. And what does that latter prove, but that the greatest poet of his age (after Shakspeare has gone) was not as much esteemed as some poets whom we know to have been more filthy, and more horrible than he? which, indeed, is the main complaint of Jonson himself. It will be rejoined, of course, that he was an altogether envious man; that he envied Shakspeare, girded at his York and Lancaster plays, at 'The Winter's Tale' and 'The Tempest,' in the prologue to 'Every Man in his Humour;' and, indeed, Jonson's writings, and those of many other playwrights, leave little doubt that stage rivalry called out the bitterest hatred, and the basest vanity; and that, perhaps, Shakspeare's great soul was giving way to the pettiest passions, when in Hamlet he had his fling at the 'aiery of children, little eyases, that cry out on the top of question, and are most tyrannically clapped for't.' It may be that he was girding in return at Jonson, when he complained that 'their writers did them wrong to make them complain against their own succession,' i.e., against themselves, when 'grown to common players.' Be that as it may. Great Shakspeare may have been unjust to only less great Jonson, as Jonson was to Shakspeare: but Jonson cer-

tainly is not so in all his charges. Some of the faults which he attributes to Shakspeare are really faults.

At all events, we know that he was not unjust to the average of his contemporaries, by the evidence of the men's own plays. We know that the decadence of the stage of which he complains went on uninterruptedly after his time, and in the very direction which he pointed out. On this point there can be no doubt; for these hodmen of poetry 'made a wall in our father's house, and the bricks are alive to testify unto this day.' So that we cannot do better than give a few samples thereof, at least samples decent enough for modern readers, and let us begin, not with a hodman, but with Jonson himself.

Now, Ben Jonson is worthy of our love and respect, for he was a very great genius, immaculate or not. 'Rare Ben,' with all his faults. One can never look without affection on the magnificent manhood of that rich free forehead, even though one may sigh over the petulance and pride which brood upon the lip and eyebrow.

> Dowered with the hate of hate, the scorn of scorn,
> The love of love.

A Michael Angelo, who could laugh, which that Italian one (one fancies) never could. One ought to have, too, a sort of delicacy about saying much against him; for he is dead, and can make (for the time being at least) no rejoinder. There are dead men whom one is not much ashamed to 'upset' after their death, because one would not have been much afraid of doing so when they were alive. But 'Rare Ben' had terrible teeth, and used them too; one would have thought twice ere he snapt at him living, and therefore it seems somewhat a cowardly trick to bark securely at his ghost. Nevertheless, it is no unfair question to ask—Do not his own words justify the Puritan complaints? If so, why does he rail at the Puritans for making their complaints? His answer would have been that they railed

in their ignorance, not merely at low art, as we call it now, but at high art and all art. Be it so. Here was their fault, if fault it was in those days. For to discriminate between high art and low art they must have seen both. And for Jonson's wrath to be fair and just he must have shown them both. Let us see what the pure drama is like which he wishes to substitute for the foul drama of his cotemporaries; and, to bring the matter nearer home, let us take one of the plays in which he hits deliberately at the Puritans, namely, the 'Alchemist,' said to have been first acted in 1610, 'by the king's majesty's servants.' Look, then, at this well-known play, and take Jonson at his word. Allow that Ananias and Tribulation Wholesome (as they very probably are) are fair portraits of a class among the sectaries of the day: but bear in mind, too, that if this be allowed, the other characters shall be held as fair portraits also. Otherwise, all must be held to be caricature; and then the onslaught on the Puritans vanishes into nothing, or worse. Now in either case, Ananias and Tribulation are the best men in the play. They palter with their consciences, no doubt; but they have consciences, which no one else in the play has, except poor Surly, and he, be it remembered, comes to shame, is made a laughing-stock, and 'cheats himself,' as he complains at last, 'by that same foolish vice of honesty:' while in all the rest what have we but every form of human baseness? Lovell, the master, if he is to be considered a negative character as doing no wrong, has, at all events, no more recorded of him than the noble act of marrying by deceit a young widow for the sake of her money, the philosopher's stone, by the bye, and highest object of most of the seventeenth century dramatists. If most of the rascals meet with due disgrace, none of them is punished; and the greatest rascal of all, who, when escape is impossible, turns traitor, and after deserving

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the cart and pillory a dozen times for his last and most utter baseness, 'is rewarded by full pardon, and the honour of addressing the audience at the play's end in the most smug and self-satisfied tone, and of putting himself on you that are my country,' not doubting, it seems, that there were among them a fair majority who would think him a very smart fellow, worthy of all imitation.

Now, is this play a moral or an immoral one? Should we take our sons and daughters to see it? Of its coarseness we say nothing. We should not endure it, of course, now-a-days; and on that point something must be said hereafter; but if we were to endure plain speaking as the only method of properly exposing vice, should we endure the moral which, instead of punishing vice, rewards it?

And, meanwhile, what sort of a general state of society among the Anti-Puritan party does the play sketch? What but a horrible background of profligacy and frivolity?

A proof, indeed, of the general downward tendencies of the age may be found in the writings of Ben Jonson himself. Howsoever pure and lofty the ideal which he laid down for himself (and no doubt honestly) in the Preface to 'Volpone,' he found it impossible to keep up to it. Nine years afterwards we find him, in his 'Bartholomew Fair,' catering to the low tastes of James the First in ribaldry, at which, if one must needs laugh (as who that was not more than man could help doing over that scene between Rabbi Busy and the puppets?), shallow and untrue as the gist of the humour is, one feels the next moment as if one had been indulging in unholy mirth at the expense of some grand old Noah who has come to shame in his cups.

But lower still does Jonson fall in that masque of

the 'Gipsies Metamorphosed,' presented to the King in 1621, when Jonson was forty-seven; old enough, one would have thought, to know better. It is not merely the insincere and all but blasphemous adulation which is shocking,—that was but the fashion of the times: but the treating these gipsies and beggars, and their 'thieves' Latin' dialect, their filthiness and cunning, ignorance and recklessness, merely as themes for immoral and inhuman laughter. Jonson was by no means the only poet of that day to whom the hordes of profligate and heathen nomads, which infested England, were only a comical phase of humanity, instead of being, as they would be now, thank God! objects of national shame and sorrow, of pity and love, which would call out in the attempt to redeem them the talents and energies of great and good men. But Jonson certainly sins more in this respect than any of his contemporaries. He takes a low pleasure in parading his intimate acquaintance with these poor creatures' foul slang and barbaric laws; and is, we should say, the natural father of that lowest form of all literature which has since amused the herd, though in a form greatly purified, in the form of 'Beggars' Operas,' 'Dick Turpins,' and 'Jack Sheppards.' Everything which is objectionable in such modern publications as these was exhibited, in far grosser forms, by one of the greatest poets who ever lived, for the amusement of a king of England; and yet the world still is at a loss to know why sober and Godfearing men detested both the poet and the king.

And that Masque is all the more saddening exhibition of the degradation of a great soul, because in it, here and there, occur passages of the old sweetness and grandeur, disjecta membra poetæ, such as these, which, even though addressed to James, are perfect:—

3rd Gypsy.

Look how the winds, upon the waves grown tame,
Take up land sounds upon their purple wings;
And, catching each from other, bear the same
To every angle of their sacred springs.
So will we take his praise, and hurl his name
About the globe, in thousand airy rings.

* * * * * *

Let us pass on—why stay to look upon the fall of such a spirit?

There is one point, nevertheless, which we may as well speak of here, and shortly; for spoken of it must be as delicately as is possible. The laugh raised at Zeal-for-the-land Busy's expense, in 'Bartholomew Fair,' turns on the Puritan dislike of seeing women's parts acted by boys. Jonson shirks the question by making poor Busy fall foul of puppets instead of live human beings: but the question is shirked nevertheless. What honest answer he could have given to the Puritans is hard to conceive. Prynne, in his Histriomastix, may have pushed a little too far the argument drawn from the prohibition in the Mosaic law: yet one would fancy that the practice was forbidden by Moses's law, not arbitrarily, but because it was a bad practice, which did harm, as every antiquarian knows that it did; and that, therefore, Prynne was but reasonable in supposing that in his day a similar practice would produce a similar evil. Our firm conviction is that it did so, and that as to the matter of fact, Prynne was perfectly right, and that to make a boy a stage-player, was pretty certainly to send him to the Devil. Let any man of common sense imagine to himself the effect on a young boy's mind which would be produced by representing shamelessly before a public audience, not merely the language, but the passions, of the most profligate women, of such characters as occur in almost every play. We appeal to common sense—would any father

allow his own children to personate, even in private, the basest of mankind? And yet we must beg pardon; for common sense, it is to be supposed, has decided against us, as long as parents allow their sons to act yearly at Westminster the stupid low art of Terence, while grave and reverend prelates and divines look on approving. But we have too good reason to know that the Westminster play has had no very purifying influence on the minds of the young gentlemen who personate heathen damsels 'of easy virtue;' and we only ask, What must have been the effect of representing infinitely fouler characters than Terence's, on the minds of uneducated lads of the lower classes? Prynne and others hint at still darker abominations than the mere defilement of the conscience: we shall say nothing of them, but that, from collateral evidence, we believe every word they say; and that when pretty little Cupid's mother, in Jonson's Christmas masque, tells how 'She could have had money enough for him, had she been tempted, and have let him out by the week to the king's players,' and how 'Master Burbadge has been about and about with her for him, and old Mr. Hemings too,' she had better have tied a stone round the child's neck, and hove him over London Bridge, than have handed him over to thrifty Burbadge, that he might make, out of the degradation of Christ's lamb, more money to buy land withal, and settle comfortably in his native town, on the fruits of others' sin. Honour to old Prynne, bitter and narrow as he was, for his passionate and eloquent appeals to the humanity and Christianity of England, in behalf of those poor children, whom not a bishop on the bench interfered to save; but, while they were writing and persecuting in behalf of baptismal regeneration, left those to perish whom they declared so stoutly to be regenerate in bap-

tism. Prynne used that argument too, and declared these stage-plays to be among the very 'pomps and vanities which Christians renounced at baptism.' He may or may not have been wrong in identifying them with the old heathen pantomimes and games of the Circus, and in burying his adversaries under a mountain of quotations from the Fathers and the Romish divines (for Prynne's reading seems to have been quite enormous). Those very prelates could express reverence enough for the Fathers when they found aught in them which could be made to justify their own system, though perhaps it had really even less to do therewith than the Roman pantomimes had with the Globe Theatre; but the Church of England had retained in her Catechism the old Roman word 'pomps,' as one of the things which were to be renounced; and as 'pomps' confessedly meant at first those very spectacles of the heathen circus and theatre, Prynne could not be very illogical in believing that, as it had been retained, it was retained to testify against something, and probably against the thing in England most like the 'pomps' of heathen Rome. Meanwhile, let Churchmen decide whether of the two was the better Churchman—Prynne, who tried to make the baptismal covenant mean something, or Laud, who allowed such a play as 'The Ordinary' to be written by his especial protégé, Cartwright, the Oxford scholar, and acted before him probably by Oxford scholars, certainly by christened boys. We do not pretend to pry into the counsels of the Most High; but if unfaithfulness to a high and holy trust, when combined with lofty professions and pretensions, does (as all history tells us that it does) draw down the vengeance of Almighty God, then we need look no further than this one neglect of the seventeenth century prelates (whether its cause was stupidity, insincerity,

or fear of the monarchs to whose tyranny they pandered), to discover full reason why it pleased God to sweep them out awhile with the besom of destruction.

There is another feature in the plays of the seventeenth century, new, as far as we know, alike to English literature and manners; and that is, the apotheosis of Rakes. Let the faults of the Middle Age, or of the Tudors, have been what they may, that class of person was in their time simply an object of disgust. The word which then signified a Rake is, in the Morte d'Arthur (temp. Ed. IV.), the foulest term of disgrace which can be cast upon a knight; while even up to the latter years of Elizabeth, the contempt of parents and elders seems to have been thought a grievous sin. In Italy, even, fountain of all the abominations of the age, respect for the fifth commandment seems to have lingered after all the other nine had been forgotten; we find Castiglione, in his 'Corteggiano' (about 1520), regretting the modest and respectful training of the generation which had preceded him; and to judge from facts, the Puritan method of education, stern as it was, was neither more nor less than the method which, a generation before, had been common to Romanist and to Protestant, Puritan and Churchman.

But with the Stuart era (perhaps at the end of Elizabeth's reign), fathers became gradually personages who are to be disobeyed, sucked of their money, fooled, even now and then robbed and beaten, by the young gentlemen of spirit; and the most Christian kings, James and Charles, with their queens and court, sit by to see ruffling and roystering, beating the watch and breaking windows, dicing, drinking, and duelling, adultery and fornication (provided the victim of the latter sin be not a damsel of gentle birth), set forth not merely as harmless amusements for young gentlemen,

but (as in Beaumont and Fletcher's play of 'Monsieur Thomas') virtues without which a man is despicable. On this point, as on many others, those who have, for ecclesiastical reasons, tried to represent the first half of the seventeenth century as a golden age, have been altogether unfair. There is no immorality of the court plays of Charles II.'s time, which may not be found in those of Charles I.'s. Sedley and Etherege are not a whit worse, but only more stupid, than Fletcher or Shirley; and Monsieur Thomas is the spiritual father of all angry lads, rufflers, bladés, bullies, mohocks, Corinthians, and dandies, down to the last drunken clerk who wrenched off a knocker, or robbed his master's till to pay his losses at a betting-office. True; we of this generation can hardly afford to throw stones. The scapegrace ideal of humanity has enjoyed high patronage within the last half century; and if Monsieur Thomas seemed fair in the eyes of James and Charles, so did Jerry and Corinthian Tom in those of some of the first gentlemen of England. Better days, however, have dawned: 'Tom and Jerry,' instead of running three hundred nights, would be as little endured on the stage as 'Monsieur Thomas' would be; the heroes who aspire toward that ideal, are now consigned by public opinion to Rhadamanthus and the treadmill; while if, like Monsieur Thomas, they knocked down their own father, they would, instead of winning a good wife, be 'cut' by braver and finer gentlemen than Monsieur Thomas himself: but what does this fact prove, save that England has at last discovered that the Puritan opinion of this matter (as of some others) was the right one?

But there is another aspect in which we must look at the Stuart patronage of profligate scapegraces on the stage. They would not have been endured on the stage, had they not been very common off it; and if

there had not been, too, in the hearts of spectators, some lurking excuse for them: it requires no great penetration to see what that excuse must have been. If the Stuart age, aristocracy, and court, were as perfect as some fancy them, such fellows would have been monstrous in it and inexcusable, probably impossible. But if it was (as it may be proved to have been) an utterly deboshed, insincere, decrepit, and decaying age, then one cannot but look on Monsieur Thomas with something of sympathy as well as pity. Take him as he stands; he is a fellow of infinite kindliness, wit, spirit, and courage: but with nothing on which to employ those powers. He would have done his work admirably in an earnest and enterprising age, as a Hudson's Bay Company clerk, an Indian civilian, a captain of a man-of-war—anything where he could find a purpose and a work. Doubt it not. How many a Monsieur Thomas of our own days, whom, a few years ago, one had rashly fancied capable of nothing higher than coulisses and cigars, private theatricals and white kid-gloves, has been not only fighting and working like a man, but meditating and writing homeward like a Christian, through the dull misery of those trenches at Sevastopol; and has found, amid the Crimean snows, that merciful fire of God, which could burn the chaff out of his heart, and thaw the crust of cold frivolity into warm and earnest life. And even at such a youth's worst, reason and conscience alike forbid us to deal out to him the same measure as we do to the offences of the cool and hoary profligate, or to the darker and subtler spiritual sins of the false professor. But if the wrath of God be not unmistakeably and practically revealed from Heaven against youthful profligacy and disobedience, in after sorrow and shame of some kind or other, against what sin is it revealed?

It was not left for our age to discover that the wages of sin is death: but Charles, his players, and his courtiers, refused to see what the very heathen had seen, and so had to be taught the truth over again by another and a more literal lesson; and what neither stage-plays nor sermons could teach them, sharp shot and cold steel did.

'But still the Puritans were barbarians for hating Art altogether.' The fact was, that they hated what art they saw in England, and that this was low art, bad art, growing ever lower and worse. If it be said, that Shakspeare's is the very highest art, the answer is, that what they hated in him was not his high art, but his low art, the foul and horrible elements which he had in common with his brother play-writers. True, there is far less of these elements in Shakspeare than in any of his compeers: but they are there. And what the Puritans hated in him was exactly what we have to expunge before we can now represent his plays. If it be said that they ought to have discerned and appreciated the higher elements in him, so ought the rest of their generation. The Puritans were surely not bound to see in Shakspeare what his patrons and his brother poets did not see. And it is surely a matter of fact, that the deep spiritual knowledge, which makes, and will make, Shakspeare's plays (and them alone of all the seventeenth century plays) a heritage for all men and all ages, quite escaped the insight of his contemporaries, who probably put him in the same rank which Webster, writing about 1612, has assigned to him.

' I have ever cherished a good opinion of other men's witty labours, especially of that full and heightened style of Master Chapman; the laboured and understanding works of Mr. Jonson; the no less witty composures of the both wittily excellent Mr. Beaumont and Mr. Fletcher; and lastly (without wrong last to be named), the right happy and copious industry of Shakspeare, Mr. Dekker, and Mr. Heywood.

While Webster, then, one of the best poets of the time, sees nothing in Shakspeare beyond the same 'happy and copious industry' which he sees in Dekker and Heywood,—while Cartwright, perhaps the only young poet of real genius in Charles the First's reign, places Fletcher's name 'Twixt Jonson's grave and Shakspeare's lighter sound,' and tells him that,

> Shakspeare to thee was dull, whose best wit lies
> I' th' ladies' questions, and the fool's replies.
> * * * * * *
> Whose wit our nice times would obsceneness call.
> * * * * * *
> Nature was all his art; thy vein was free
> As his, but without his scurrility;*

while even Milton, who, Puritan as he was, loved art with all his soul, only remarks on Shakspeare's marvellous lyrical sweetness, 'his native wood-notes wild;' what shame to the Puritans if they, too, did not discover the stork among the cranes?

An answer has been often given to arguments of this kind, which deserves a few moments' consideration. It is said, 'the grossness of the old play-writers was their misfortune, not their crime. It was the fashion of the age. It is not our fashion, certainly; but they meant no harm by it. The age was a free-spoken one; and perhaps none the worse for that.' Mr. Dyce, indeed, the editor of Webster's plays, seems inclined to exalt this habit into a virtue. After saying that the licentious and debauched are made 'as odious in representation as they would be if they were actually present' (an assertion which must be flatly denied,

* What canon of cleanliness, now lost, did Cartwright possess, which enabled him to pronounce Fletcher, or indeed himself, purer than Shakspeare, and his times 'nicer' than those of James? To our generation, less experienced in the quantitative analysis of moral dirt, they will appear all equally foul.

save in the case of Shakspeare, who seldom or never, to our remembrance, seems to forget that the wages of sin is death, and who, however coarse he may be, keeps stoutly on the side of virtue), Mr. Dyce goes on to say, that 'perhaps the language of the stage is purified in proportion as our morals are deteriorated; and we dread the mention of the vices which we are not ashamed to practise; while our forefathers, under the sway of a less fastidious, but a more energetic principle of virtue, were careless of words, and only considerate of actions.'

To this clever piece of special pleading we can only answer, that the fact is directly contrary; that there is a mass of unanimous evidence which cannot be controverted, to prove that England, in the first half of the seventeenth century, was far more immoral than in the nineteenth; that the proofs lie patent to any dispassionate reader; but that these pages will not be defiled by the details of them.

Let it be said that coarseness was 'the fashion of the age.' The simple question is, was it a good fashion or a bad? It is said—with little or no proof—that in simple states of society, much manly virtue, and much female purity, have often consisted with very broad language and very coarse manners. But what of that? Drunkards may very often be very honest and brave men; does that make drunkenness no sin? or will honesty and courage prevent a man's being the worse for hard drinking? If so, why have we given up coarseness of language; and why has it been the better, rather than the worse part of the nation, the educated and religious, rather than the ignorant and wicked, who have given it up? Why? Simply because the nation, and all other nations on the Continent, in proportion to their morality, have found out that

coarseness of language is, to say the least, unfit and inexpedient; that if it be wrong to do certain things, it is also, on the whole, right not to talk of them; that even certain things which are right and blessed and holy, lose their sanctity by being dragged cynically to the light of day, instead of being left in the mystery in which God has wisely shrouded them. On the whole, one is inclined to suspect the defence of coarseness as insincere. Certainly, in our day, it will not hold. If any one wishes to hear coarse language in 'good society,' he can hear it in Paris: but one questions whether Parisian society be now 'under the sway of a more energetic principle of virtue' than our own. The sum total of the matter seems to be, that England has found out that on this (and as we shall show hereafter, on several other points) the old Puritans were right. And, quaintly enough, the party in the English Church who hold the Puritans most in abhorrence, are the most scrupulous now upon this very point, and, in their dread of contaminating the minds of youth, are carrying education, at school and college, to such a more than Puritan precision, that with the most virtuous and benevolent intentions, they are in danger of giving lads merely a conventual education,—a hot-house training which will render them incapable hereafter of facing either the temptations or the labour of the world. They themselves republished Massinger's 'Virgin Martyr,' because it was a pretty Popish story, probably written by a Papist (for there is every reason to believe that Massinger was one), setting forth how the heroine was attended all through by an angel in the form of a page, and how (not to mention the really beautiful ancient fiction about the fruits which Dorothea sends back from Paradise) Theophilus overcomes the devil by means of a cross composed of flowers.

Massinger's account of Theophilus' conversion will, we fear, make those who know anything of that great crisis of the human spirit, suspect that Massinger's experience thereof was but small: but the fact which is most noteworthy is this—that the 'Virgin Martyr' is actually one of the foulest plays known. Every pains has been taken to prove that the indecent scenes in the play were not written by Massinger, but by Dekker; on what grounds we know not. If Dekker assisted Massinger in the play, as he is said to have done, we are aware of no canons of internal criticism which will enable us to decide, as boldly as Mr. Gifford does, that all the indecency is Dekker's, and all the poetry Massinger's. He confesses (as indeed he is forced to do) that 'Massinger himself is not free from dialogues of low wit and buffoonery;' and then, after calling the scenes in question 'detestable ribaldry,' 'a loathsome sooterkin, engendered of filth and dulness,' recommends them to the reader's supreme scorn and contempt,—with which feelings the reader will doubtless regard them; but will also, if he be a thinking man, draw from them the following conclusions: that even if they be Dekker's (of which there is no proof), Massinger was forced, in order to the success of his play, to pander to the public taste, by allowing Dekker to interpolate these villanies; that the play which, above all others of the seventeenth century, contains the most supralunar rosepink of piety, devotion, and purity, also contains the stupidest abominations of any extant play; and lastly, that those who reprinted it as a sample of the Christianity of that past golden age of High-churchmanship, had to leave out about one-third of the play, for fear of becoming amenable to the laws against abominable publications.

No one denies that there are nobler words than any

that we have quoted, in Jonson, in Fletcher, or in Massinger: but there is hardly a play (perhaps none) of theirs in which the immoralities of which we complain do not exist,—few of which they do not form an integral part; and now, if this is the judgment which we have to pass on the morality of the greater poets, what must the lesser ones be like?

Look, then, at Webster's two masterpieces, 'Vittoria Corrombona' and the 'Duchess of Malfi.' A few words spent on them will surely not be wasted; for they are pretty generally agreed to be the two best tragedies written since Shakspeare's time.

The whole story of 'Vittoria Corrombona' is one of sin and horror. The subject-matter of the play is altogether made up of the fiercest and the basest passions. But the play is not a study of those passions from which we may gain a great insight into human nature. There is no trace (nor is there, again, in the 'Duchess of Malfi') of that development of human souls for good or evil, which is Shakspeare's especial power,—the power which (far more than any accidental 'beauties') makes his plays, to this day, the delight alike of the simple and the wise, while his contemporaries are all but forgotten. The highest aim of dramatic art is to exhibit the development of the human soul; to construct dramas in which the conclusion shall depend, not on the events, but on the characters; and in which the characters shall not be mere embodiments of a certain passion, or a certain 'humour:' but persons, each unlike all others; each having a destiny of his own, by virtue of his own peculiarities, of his own will, and each proceeding toward that destiny; unfolding his own strength and weakness before the eyes of the audience; and that in such a way, that after his first introduction, they should be able (in proportion to their knowledge of

human nature) to predict his conduct under any given circumstances. This is indeed 'high art:' but we find no more of it in Webster than in the rest. His characters, be they old or young, come on the stage ready-made, full grown, and stereotyped; and, therefore, in general, they are not characters at all, but mere passions or humours in human form. Now and then he essays to draw a character: but it is analytically, by description, not synthetically and dramatically, by letting the man exhibit himself in action; and in the 'Duchess of Malfi' he falls into the great mistake of telling, by Antonio's mouth, more about the Duke and the Cardinal than he afterwards makes them act. Very different is Shakspeare's method of giving, at the outset, some single delicate hint about his personages, which will serve as a clue to their whole future conduct, thus 'showing the whole in each part,' and stamping each man with a personality, to a degree which no other dramatist has ever approached.

But the truth is, that the study of human nature is not Webster's aim. He has to arouse terror and pity, not thought, and he does it in his own way, by blood and fury, madmen and screech-owls, not without a rugged power. There are scenes of his, certainly, like that of Vittoria's trial, which have been praised for their delineation of character: but it is one thing to solve the problem, which Shakspeare has so handled in 'Lear,' 'Othello,' and 'Richard the Third,' 'Given a mixed character, to show how he may become criminal,' and to solve Webster's 'Given a ready-made criminal, to show how he commits his crimes.' To us the knowledge of character shown in Vittoria's trial scene, is not an insight into Vittoria's essential heart and brain, but a general acquaintance with the conduct of all bold bad women when brought to bay. Poor Elia, who knew

the world from books, and human nature principally from his own loving and gentle heart, talks of Vittoria's 'innocence-resembling boldness'*—and 'seeming to see that matchless beauty of her face, which inspires such gay confidence in her,' and so forth.

Perfectly just and true, not of Vittoria merely, but of the average of unfortunate females in the presence of a police magistrate: yet amounting in all merely to this, that the strength of Webster's confest master-scene lies simply in intimate acquaintance with vicious nature in general. We will say no more on this matter; save to ask, Cui bono?—was the art of which this was the highest manifestation likely to be of much use to mankind, much less able to excuse its palpably disgusting and injurious accompaniments?

The 'Duchess of Malfi' is certainly in a purer and loftier strain: but in spite of the praise which has been lavished on her, we must take the liberty to doubt whether the poor Duchess is a 'person' at all. General goodness and beauty, intense though pure affection for a man below her in rank, and a will to carry out her purpose at all hazards, are not enough to distinguish her from thousands of other women: but Webster has no such purpose. What he was thinking and writing of was, not truth, but effect; not the Duchess, but her story; not her brothers, but their rage; not Antonio, her major-domo and husband, but his good and bad fortunes; and thus he has made Antonio merely insipid, the brothers merely unnatural, and the Duchess (in the critical moment of the play) merely forward. That curious scene, in which she acquaints Antonio with her love

* C. Lamb. 'Specimens of English Dramatic Poets,' p. 229. From which specimens, be it remembered, he has had to expunge not only all the comic scenes, but generally the greater part of the plot itself, to make the book at all tolerable.

for him, and makes him marry her, is, on the whole, painful. Webster himself seems to have felt that it was so; and dreading lest he had gone too far, to have tried to redeem the Duchess at the end by making her break down in two exquisite lines of loving shame: but he has utterly forgotten to explain or justify her love, by giving to Antonio (as Shakspeare would probably have done) such strong specialties of character as would compel, and therefore excuse, his mistress's affection. He has plenty of time to do this in the first scenes,—time which he wastes on irrelevant matter; and all that we gather from them is that Antonio is a worthy and thoughtful person. If he gives promise of being more, he utterly disappoints that promise afterwards. In the scene in which the Duchess tells her love, he is far smaller, rather than greater, than the Antonio of the opening scene: though (as there) altogether passive. He hears his mistress's declaration just as any other respectable youth might; is exceedingly astonished, and a good deal frightened; has to be talked out of his fears till one naturally expects a revulsion on the Duchess's part into something like scorn or shame (which might have given a good opportunity for calling out sudden strength in Antonio); but so busy is Webster with his business of drawing mere blind love, that he leaves Antonio to be a mere puppet, whose worthiness we are to believe in only from the Duchess's assurance to him that he is the perfection of all that a man should be; which, as all lovers are of the same opinion the day before the wedding, is not of much importance.

"Neither in his subsequent misfortunes does Antonio make the least struggle to prove himself worthy of his mistress's affection. He is very resigned, and loving, and so forth. To win renown by great deeds, and so

prove his wife in the right to her brothers and to all the world, never crosses his imagination. His highest aim (and that only at last) is slavishly to entreat pardon from his brothers-in-law, for the mere offence of marrying their sister; and he dies by an improbable accident, the same pious and respectable insipidity which he has lived,—'ne valant pas la peine qui se donne pour lui.' The prison-scenes between the Duchess and her tormentors are painful enough, if to give pain be a dramatic virtue; and she appears in them really noble; and might have appeared far more so, had Webster taken half as much pains with her as he has with the madmen, ruffians, ghosts, and screech-owls in which his heart really delights. The only character really worked out, so as to live and grow under his hand, is Bosola, who, of course, is the villain of the piece, and being a rough fabric, is easily manufactured with rough tools. Still, Webster has his wonderful touches here and there,—

Cariola. Hence, villains, tyrants, murderers! Alas!
What will you do with my lady? Call for help!
Duchess. To whom? to our next neighbours? they are mad folk.
Farewell, Cariola.
I pray thee look thou giv'st my little boy
Some syrup for his cold; and let the girl
Say her prayers ere she sleep.—Now, what you please;
What death?

And so the play ends, as does 'Vittoria Corrombona,' with half-a-dozen murders coram populo, howls, despair, bedlam and the shambles; putting the reader marvellously in mind of that well-known old book of the same era, 'Reynolds's God's Revenge against the Crying Sins of Murther and Adultery,' in which, with all due pious horror and bombastic sermonizing, the national appetite for abominations is duly fed with some fifty unreadable Spanish histories, French his-

tories, Italian histories, and so forth, one or two of which, of course, are known to have furnished subjects for the playwrights of the day.

The next play-writer whom we are bound to notice is James Shirley, one of the many converts to Romanism which those days saw, who appears, up to the breaking out of the Civil War, to have been the Queen's favourite poet, and who, according to Langbaine, was 'one of such incomparable parts, that he was the chief of the second-rate poets, and by some has been thought even equal to Fletcher himself.'

We must entreat the reader's attention while we examine Shirley's 'Gamester.' Whether the examination be a pleasant business or not, it is somewhat important; 'for,' says Mr. Dyce, 'the following memorandum respecting it occurs in the office-book of the Master of the Records:—'On Thursday night, 6th of February, 1633, 'The Gamester' was acted at Court, made by Sherley, out of a plot of the king's, given him by mee, and well likte. The king sayd it was the best play he had seen for seven years.''

This is, indeed, important. We shall now have an opportunity of fairly testing at the same time the taste of the Royal Martyr, and the average merit, at least in the opinion of the Caroline Court, of the dramatists of that day.

The plot which Charles sent to Shirley as a fit subject for his muse, is taken from one of those abominable collections of Italian novels of which we have already had occasion to speak, and occurs in the second part of the Ducento Novelle of Celio Malespini; and what it is we shall see forthwith.

The play opens with a scene between one Wilding and his ward Penelope, in which he attempts to seduce the young lady, in language which has certainly the

merit of honesty; she refuses him, but civilly enough; and on her departure Mrs. Wilding enters, who, it seems, is the object of her husband's loathing, though young, handsome, and in all respects charming enough. After a scene of stupid and brutal insults, he has the effrontery to ask her to bring Penelope to him, at which she naturally goes out in anger; and Hazard, the gamester, enters,—a personage without a character, in any sense of the word. There is next some talk against duelling, sensible enough, which arises out of a bye-plot, —one Delamere having been wounded in a duel by one Beaumont, mortally as is supposed. This bye-plot runs through the play, giving an opportunity for bringing in a father of the usual playhouse type,—a Sir Richard Hurry, who is, of course, as stupid, covetous, proud, and tyrannical, and unfeeling, as playhouse fathers were then bound to be; but it is of the most commonplace form, turning on the stale trick of a man expecting to be hanged for killing some one who turns out after all to have recovered, and having no bearing whatsoever on the real plot, which is this,—Mrs. Wilding, in order to win back her husband's affections, persuades Penelope to seem to grant his suit, while Mrs. Wilding herself is in reality to supply her niece's place, and shame her husband into virtue. Wilding tells Hazard of the good fortune which he fancies is coming, in scenes of which one can only say, that if they are not written for the purpose of exciting the passions, it is hard to see why they were written at all. But, being with Hazard in a gambling-house, at the very hour at which he is to meet Penelope, and having had a run of bad luck, he borrows a hundred pounds of Hazard, stays at the table to recover his losses, and sends Hazard to supply his place with the supposed Penelope. A few hours before Penelope and Hazard have met for the first time, and

Penelope considers him, as she says to herself aside, 'a handsome gentleman.' He begins, of course, talking lewdly to her; and the lady so far from being shocked with the freedom of her new acquaintance, pays him back in his own coin in such good earnest that she soon silences him in the battle of dirt-throwing. Of this sad scene, it is difficult to say, whether it indicates a lower standard of purity and courtesy in the poet, in the audience who endured it, or in the society of which it was, of course, intended to be a brilliant picture. If the cavaliers and damsels of Charles the First's day were in the habit of talking in that way to each other (and if they had not been, Shirley would not have dared to represent them as doing so), one cannot much wonder that the fire of God was needed to burn up (though, alas! only for a while) such a state of society, and that when needed the fire fell.

The rest of the story is equally bad. Hazard next day gives Wilding voluptuous descriptions of his guilt, and while Wilding is in the height of self-reproach at having handed over his victim to another, his wife meets him, and informs him that she herself and not Penelope has been the victim. Now comes the crisis of the plot, the conception which so delighted the taste of the Royal Martyr. Wilding finds himself, as he expresses it, 'fitted with a pair of horns of his own making;' and his rage, shame, and base attempts to patch up his own dishonour by marrying Penelope to Hazard (even at the cost of disgorging the half of her portion, which he had intended to embezzle), furnish amusement to the audience to the end of the play; at last, on Hazard and Penelope coming in married, Wilding is informed that he has been deceived, and that his wife is unstained, having arranged with Hazard to keep up the delusion, in order to frighten him into

good behaviour; whereupon Mr. Wilding promises to be a good husband henceforth, and the play ends.

Throughout the whole of this farrago of improbable iniquity not a single personage has any mark of personal character, or even of any moral quality, save (in Mrs. Wilding's case) that of patience under injury. Hazard 'The Gamester' is chosen as the hero, for what reason it is impossible to say; he is a mere profligate nonentity, doing nothing which may distinguish him from any other gamester and blackguard, save that he is, as we are told,

> A man careless
> Of wounds; and though he have not had the luck
> To kill so many as another, dares
> Fight with all them that have.

He, nevertheless, being in want of money, takes a hundred pounds from a foolish old city merchant (city merchants are always fools in the seventeenth century) to let his nephew, young Barnacle, give him a box on the ear in a tavern, and (after the young cit has been transformed into an intolerable bully by the fame so acquired) takes another hundred pounds from the repentant uncle for kicking the youth back into his native state of peaceful cowardice. With the exception of some little humour in these scenes with young Barnacle the whole play is thoroughly stupid. We look in vain for anything like a reflection, a sentiment, even a novel image. Its language, like its morality, is all but on a level with the laboured vulgarities of the 'Relapse' or the 'Provoked Wife,' save that (Shirley being a confessed copier of the great dramatists of the generation before him) there is enough of the manner of Fletcher and Ben Jonson kept up to hide, at first sight, the utter want of anything like their matter; and as one sickens with contempt at the rakish swagger, and the artificial

smartness of his coxcombs, one regrets the racy and unaffected blackguardism of the earlier poets' men.

This, forsooth, is the best comedy that Charles had heard for seven years, and the plot, which he himself furnished for the occasion, fitted to an English audience by a Romish convert.

And yet there is one dramatist of that fallen generation over whose memory one cannot but linger, fancying what he would have become, and wondering why so great a spirit was checked suddenly ere half developed, by the fever which carried him off, with several other Oxford worthies, in 1643, when he was at most thirty-two (and according to one account only twenty-eight) years old. Let which of the two dates be the true one, Cartwright must always rank among our wondrous youths, by the side of Prince Henry, the Admirable Crichton, and others, of whom one's only doubt is, whether they were not too wondrous, too precociously complete for future development. We find Dr. Fell, sometime Bishop of Oxford, saying that 'Cartwright was the utmost man could come to;' we read how his body was as handsome as his soul; how he was an expert linguist, not only in Greek and Latin, but in French and Italian, an excellent orator, admirable poet; how Aristotle was no less known to him than Cicero and Virgil, and his metaphysical lectures preferred to those of all his predecessors, the Bishop of Lincoln only excepted, 'and his sermons, lastly,' as much admired as his other composures, and how one fitly applied to him that saying of Aristotle concerning Œschron the poet, that, 'he could not tell what Œschron could not do.' We find pages on pages of high-flown epitaphs and sonnets on him, in which the exceeding bad taste of his admirers makes one inclined to doubt the taste of him whom they so bedaub with praise; and certainly, in

pending for his amusingness on his quaint antiquated language, is such a sketch as Mr. Dickens need not have been ashamed to draw.

The 'Royal Slave' seems to have been considered, both by the Court and by his contemporaries, his masterpiece. And justly so; yet our pleasure at Charles's having shown, for once, good taste, is somewhat marred by Langbaine's story, that the good acting of the Oxford scholars, 'stately scenes, and richness of the Persian habits,' had as much to do with the success of the play as its 'stately style,' and 'the excellency of the songs, which were set by that admirable composer, Mr. Henry James.' True it is, that the songs are excellent, as are all Cartwright's; for grace, simplicity, and sweetness, equal to any (save Shakspeare's) which the seventeenth century produced: but, curiously enough, his lyric faculty seems to have exhausted itself in these half-dozen songs. His minor poems are utterly worthless, out-Cowleying Cowley in frigid and fantastic conceits; and his various addresses to the king and queen are as bombastic, and stupid, and artificial, as anything which disgraced the reigns of Charles II. or his brother.

Are we to gather from this fact that Cartwright was not really an original genius, but only a magnificent imitator; that he could write plays well, because others had written them well already, but only for that reason; and that for the same reason, when he attempted detached lyrics and addresses, he could only follow the abominable models which he saw around him? We know not; for surely in Jonson and Shakspeare's minor poems he might have found simpler and sweeter types; and even in those of Fletcher, who appears, from his own account, to have been his especial pattern; Shakspeare, however, as we have seen, he looked down on, as did the rest of his generation.

Cartwright, as an Oxford scholar, is of course a worshipper of Charles, and a hater of Puritans. We do not wish to raise a prejudice against so young a man, by quoting any of the ridiculous, and often somewhat abject, rant with which he addresses their majesties; on their return from Scotland, on the queen's delivery, on the birth of the Duke of York, and so forth;—for in that he did but copy the tone of grave divines and pious prelates; but he, unfortunately for his fame, is given (as young geniuses are sometimes) to prophecy; and two of his prophecies, at least, have hardly been fulfilled. He was somewhat mistaken, when, on the birth of the Duke of York, he informed the world that

> The state is now past fear; and all that we
> Need wish besides is perpetuity;

and after indulging in various explanations of the reason why 'Nature' showed no prodigies at the birth of the future patron of Judge Jeffreys, which, if he did not believe them, are lies, and if he did, are very like blasphemies, declares that the infant is

> A son of Mirth,
> Of Peace and Friendship; 'tis a quiet birth.

Nor, again, if spirits in the other world have knowledge of human affairs, can Mr. Cartwright be now altogether satisfied with his rogue's augury as to the capacities of the New England Puritans, when he intends to pick pockets in the New World, having made the Old too hot to hold him—

> They are good silly people; souls that will
> Be cheated without trouble: one eye is
> Put out with zeal, th' other with ignorance,
> And yet they think they're eagles.

Whatsoever were the faults of the Pilgrim Fathers (and they were many), silliness was certainly not

among them. But such was the Court fashion. Any insult, however shallow, ribald, and doggrel, (and all these terms are just of the mock-Puritan ballad which Sir Christopher sings in 'The Ordinary,' just after an epithalamium so graceful and melodious, though a little 'warm' in tone, as to really be out of place in such a fellow's mouth,) passes current against men who were abroad the founders of the United States, and the forefathers of the acutest and most enterprising nation on earth, and who at home proved themselves, by terrible fact, not only the physically stronger party, but the more cunning. But so it was fated to be. A deep mist of conceit, fed by the shallow breath of parasites, players, and pedants, wrapt that unhappy Court in blind security, till 'the breaking was as the swelling out of a high wall, which cometh suddenly in an instant.'

'But after all, what Poetry and Art there was in that day, good or bad, all belonged to the Royalists.'

All? There are those who think that, if mere concettism be a part of poetry, Quarles is as great a poet as Cowley or George Herbert, Vaughan or Withers. On this question, and on the real worth of the seventeenth century lyrists, a great deal has to be said hereafter. Meanwhile, there are those, too, who believe John Bunyan, considered simply as an artist, to be the greatest dramatic author whom England has seen since Shakspeare; and there linger, too, in the libraries and the ears of men, words of one John Milton. He was no rigid hater of the beautiful, merely because it was heathen and Popish; no more, indeed, were many highly-educated and highly-born gentlemen of the Long Parliament: no more was Cromwell himself, whose delight was (if we may trust that double renegade Waller,) to talk over with him the worthies of

Rome and Greece, and who is said to have preserved for the nation Raphael's cartoons, and Andrea Mantegna's triumph, when Charles' pictures were sold. But Milton had steeped his whole soul in romance. He had felt the beauty and glory of the chivalrous Middle Age as deeply as Shakspeare himself; he had as much classical lore as any Oxford pedant. He felt to his heart's core, (for he sang of it, and had he not felt it he would only have written of it,) the magnificence and worth of really high art, of the drama when it was worthy of man and of itself.

> Of gorgeous tragedy,
> Presenting Thebes' or Pelops' line,
> Or the Tale of Troy divine,
> Or what, though rare, of later age,
> Ennobled hath thy buskin'd stage.

No poet, perhaps, shows wider and truer sympathy with every form of the really beautiful in art, nature, and history: and yet he was a Puritan.

Yes, Milton was a Puritan; one, who instead of trusting himself, and his hopes of the universe, to secondhand hearsays, systems, and traditions, had looked God's Word and his own soul in the face, and determined to act on that which he had found. And therefore it is that to open his works at any stray page, after these effeminate Carolists, is like falling asleep in a stifling city drawing-room, amid Rococo French furniture, not without untidy traces of last night's ball, and awaking in an alpine valley, amid the scent of sweet cyclamens and pine boughs, to the music of trickling rivulets and shouting hunters, beneath the dark cathedral aisles of mighty pines, and here and there, above them and beyond, the spotless peaks of everlasting snow; while far beneath your feet—

> The hemisphere of earth, in clearest ken,
> Stretched to the amplest reach of prospect, lies.

Take any—the most hackneyed passage of 'Comus,' the 'Allegro,' the 'Penseroso,' the 'Paradise Lost,' and see the freshness, the sweetness, the simplicity, which is strangely combined with the pomp, the self-restraint, the earnestness of every word; take him even, as an experimentum crucis, when he trenches upon ground heathen and questionable, and tries the court poets at their own weapons,—

> Or whether (as some sager sing),
> The frolic wind that breathes the spring,
> Zephyr, with Aurora playing,
> As he met her once a-Maying,
> There on beds of violets blue,
> And fresh-blown roses washed in dew——

but why quote what all the world knows?—where shall we find such real mirth, ease, sweetness, dance and song of words in anything written for five-and-twenty years before him? True, he was no great dramatist. He never tried to be one: but there was no one in his generation who could have written either 'Comus' or 'Samson Agonistes.' And if, as is commonly believed, and as his countenance seems to indicate, he was deficient in humour, so were his contemporaries, with the sole exception of Cartwright. Witty he could be, and bitter: but he did not live in a really humourous age; and if he has none of the rollicking fun of the foxhound puppy, at least he has none of the obscene gibber of the ape.

After all, the great fact stands, that the only lasting poet of that generation was a Puritan; one who, if he did not write dramas in sport, at least acted dramas in earnest. For drama means etymologically, action and doing; and of the drama there are, and always will be, two kinds: one the representative, the other the actual; and for a world wherein there is no superabundance of good

deeds, the latter will be always the better kind. It is good to represent heroical action in verse, and on the stage: it is good to 'purify,' as old Aristotle has it, 'the affections by pity and terror.' There is an ideal tragedy, and an ideal comedy also, which one can imagine as an integral part of the highest Christian civilization. But when 'Christian' tragedy sinks below the standard of heathen Greek tragedy; when, instead of setting forth heroical deeds, it teaches the audience new possibilities of crime, and new excuses for those crimes; when, instead of purifying the affections by pity and terror, it confounds the moral sense by exciting pity and terror merely for the sake of excitement, careless whether they be well or ill directed, then it is of the devil, and the sooner it returns to its father the better for mankind. When, again, comedy, instead of stirring a divine scorn of baseness, or even a kindly and indulgent smile at the weaknesses and oddities of humanity, learns to make a mock of sin,—to find excuses for the popular frailties which it pretends to expose,—then it also is of the devil, and to the devil let it go; while honest and earnest men, who have no such exceeding love of 'Art' that they must needs have bad art rather than none at all, do the duty which lies nearest them amid clean whitewash and honest prose. The whole theory of 'Art, its dignity and vocation,' seems to us at times questionable, if coarse facts are to be allowed to weigh, (as we suppose they are,) against delicate theories. If we are to judge by the example of Italy, the country which has been most of all devoted to the practice of 'Art,' then a nation is not necessarily free, strong, moral, or happy because it can 'represent' facts, or can understand how other people have represented them. We do not hesitate to go farther, and to say, that the present weakness of Germany

is to be traced in a great degree to that pernicious habit of mind which makes her educated men fancy it enough to represent noble thoughts and feelings, or to analyse the representations of them: while they do not bestir themselves, or dream that there is the least moral need for bestirring themselves, toward putting these thoughts and feelings into practice. Goethe herein is indeed the type of a very large class of Germans: God grant that no generation may ever see such a type common in England; and that our race, remembering ever that the golden age of the English drama was one of private immorality, public hypocrisy, ecclesiastical pedantry, and regal tyranny, and ended in the temporary downfall of Church and Crown, may be more ready to do fine things than to write fine books; and act in their lives, as those old Puritans did, a drama which their descendants may be glad to put on paper for them, long after they are dead.

For surely these Puritans were dramatic enough, poetic enough, picturesque enough. We do not speak of such fanatics as Balfour of Burley, or any other extravagant person whom it may have suited Walter Scott to take as a typical personage. We speak of the average Puritan nobleman, gentleman, merchant, or farmer, and hold him to have been a picturesque and poetical man,—a man of higher imagination and deeper feeling than the average of court poets, and a man of sound taste also. What is to be said for his opinions about the stage, has been seen already; but it seems to have escaped most persons' notice, that either all England is grown very foolish, or the Puritan opinions on several matters have been justified by time.

On the matter of the stage, the world has certainly come over to their way of thinking. Few educated men now think it worth while to go to see any play,

and that exactly for the same reasons as the Puritans put forward; and still fewer educated men think it worth while to write plays: finding that since the grosser excitements of the imagination have become forbidden themes, there is really very little to write about.

But in the matter of dress and of manners, the Puritan triumph has been complete. Even their worst enemies have come over to their side, and 'the whirligig of time has brought about its revenge.'

Their canons of taste have become those of all England, and High Churchmen, who still call them Roundheads and Cropped-ears, go about rounder-headed and closer cropt than they ever went. They held it more rational to cut the hair to a comfortable length than to wear effeminate curls down the back. And we cut ours much shorter than they ever did. They held (with the Spaniards, then the finest gentlemen in the world), that sad, i.e., dark colours, above all black, were the fittest for stately and earnest gentlemen. We all, from the Tractarian to the Anythingarian, are exactly of the same opinion. They held that lace, perfumes, and jewellery on a man were marks of unmanly foppishness and vanity; and so hold the finest gentlemen in England now. They thought it equally absurd and sinful for a man to carry his income on his back, and bedizen himself out in reds, blues, and greens, ribbons, knots, slashes, and 'treble quadruple dædalian ruffs, built up on iron and timber, which have more arches in them for pride than London Bridge for use.' We, if we met such a ruffed and ruffled worthy as used to swagger by hundreds up and down Paul's Walk, not knowing how to get a dinner, much less to pay his tailor, should look on him as firstly a fool, and secondly a swindler; while

if we met an old Puritan, we should consider him a man gracefully and picturesquely drest, but withal in the most perfect sobriety of good taste; and when we discovered (as we probably should), over and above, that the harlequin cavalier had a box of salve and a pair of dice in one pocket, a pack of cards and a few pawnbrokers' duplicates in the other; that his thoughts were altogether of citizens' wives and their too easy virtue; and that he could not open his mouth without a dozen oaths, we should consider the Puritan (even though he did quote Scripture somewhat through his nose), as the gentleman; and the courtier as a most offensive specimen of the 'snob triumphant,' glorying in his shame. The picture is not ours, nor even the Puritan's. It is Bishop Hall's, Bishop Earle's,—it is Beaumont's, Fletcher's, Jonson's, Shakspeare's,—the picture which every dramatist, as well as satirist, has drawn of the 'gallant' of the seventeenth century. No one can read those writers honestly without seeing that the Puritan, and not the cavalier conception of what a British gentleman should be, is the one accepted by the whole nation at this day.

In applying the same canon to the dress of women, they were wrong. As in other matters, they had hold of one pole of a double truth, and erred in applying it exclusively to all cases. But there are two things to be said for them; first, that the dress of that day was palpably an incentive to the profligacy of that day, and therefore had to be protested against; in these more moral times, ornaments and fashions may be harmlessly used which then could not be used without harm. And next, it is undeniable that sober dressing is more and more becoming the fashion among well-bred women, and that among them, too, the Puritan canons are gaining ground.

We have just said that the Puritans held too exclusively to one pole of a double truth. They did so, no doubt, in their hatred of the drama. Their belief that human relations were, if not exactly sinful, at least altogether carnal and unspiritual, prevented their conceiving the possibility of any truly Christian drama, and led them at times into strange and sad errors, like that New England ukase of Cotton Mather's, who punished the woman who should kiss her infant on the Sabbath day. Yet their extravagances on this point were but the honest revulsion from other extravagances on the opposite side. If the undistinguishing and immoral Autotheism of the playwrights, and the luxury and heathendom of the higher classes, first in Italy and then in England, were the natural revolt of the human mind against the Manichæism of Popish monkery, then the severity and exclusiveness of Puritanism was a natural and necessary revolt against that luxury and immorality: a protest for man's God-given superiority over nature, against that Naturalism which threatened to end in sheer brutality. While Italian prelates have found an apologist in Mr. Roscoe, and English playwrights in Mr. Gifford, the old Puritans, who felt and asserted, however extravagantly, that there was an eternal law, which was above all Borgias and Machiavels, Stuarts and Fletchers, have surely a right to a fair trial. If they went too far in their contempt for humanity, certainly no one interfered to set them right. The Anglicans of that time, who held intrinsically the same anthropologic notions, and yet wanted the courage and sincerity to carry them out as honestly, neither could nor would throw any light upon the controversy; and the only class who sided with the poor playwrights in asserting that there were more things in man, and more excuses for man, than were dreamt of

in Prynne's philosophy, were the Jesuit Casuists, who, by a fatal perverseness, used all their little knowledge of human nature to the same undesirable purpose as the playwrights; namely, to prove how it was possible to commit every conceivable sinful action without sinning. No wonder that in an age in which courtiers and theatre-haunters were turning Romanists by the dozen, and the priest-ridden Queen was the chief patroness of the theatre, the Puritans should have classed players and Jesuits in the same category, and deduced the parentage of both alike from the father of lies.

But as for these Puritans having been merely the sour, narrow, inhuman persons they are vulgarly supposed to have been, credat Judæus. There were sour and narrow men enough among them; so there were in the opposite party. No Puritan could have had less poetry in him, less taste, less feeling, than Laud himself. But is there no poetry save words? no drama save that which is presented on the stage? Is this glorious earth, and the souls of living men, mere prose, as long as 'carent vate sacro,' who will, forsooth, do them the honour to make poetry out of a little of them (and of how little)! by translating them into words, which he himself, just in proportion as he is a good poet, will confess to be clumsy, tawdry, ineffectual? Was there no poetry in these Puritans, because they wrote no poetry? We do not mean now the unwritten tragedy of the battle-psalm, and the charge; but simple idyllic poetry and quiet home-drama, love-poetry of the heart and the hearth, and the beauties of every-day human life? Take the most commonplace of them: was Zeal-for-Truth Thoresby, of Thoresby Rise in Deeping Fen, because his father had thought fit to give him an ugly and silly name, the less of a noble lad? Did his name prevent his being six feet high? Were his shoulders

the less broad for it, his cheeks the less ruddy for it? He wore his flaxen hair of the same length that every one now wears theirs, instead of letting it hang halfway to his waist in essenced curls; but was he therefore the less of a true Viking's son, bold-hearted as his sea-roving ancestors who won the Danelagh by Canute's side, and settled there on Thoresby Rise, to grow wheat and breed horses, generation succeeding generation, in the old moated grange? He carried a Bible in his jack-boot: but did that prevent him, as Oliver rode past him with an approving smile on Naseby-field, thinking himself a very handsome fellow, with his mustache and imperial, and bright red coat, and cuirass well polished, in spite of many a dint, as he sate his father's great black horse as gracefully and firmly as any long-locked and essenced cavalier in front of him? Or did it prevent him thinking too, for a moment, with a throb of the heart, that sweet Cousin Patience far away at home, could she but see him, might have the same opinion of him as he had of himself? Was he the worse for the thought? He was certainly not the worse for checking it the next instant, with manly shame for letting such 'carnal vanities' rise in his heart, while he was 'doing the Lord's work' in the teeth of death and hell: but was there no poetry in him then? No poetry in him, five minutes after, as the long rapier swung round his head, redder and redder at every sweep? We are befooled by names. Call him Crusader instead of Roundhead, and he seems at once (granting him only sincerity, which he had, and that of a right awful kind) as complete a knight-errant as ever watched and prayed, ere putting on his spurs, in fantastic Gothic chapel, beneath 'storied windows richly dight.' Was there no poetry in him, either, half an hour afterwards,

as he lay bleeding across the corpse of the gallant horse, waiting for his turn with the surgeon, and fumbled for the Bible in his boot, and tried to hum a psalm, and thought of Cousin Patience, and his father, and his mother, and how they would hear, at least, that he had played the man in Israel that day, and resisted unto blood, striving against sin and the Man of Sin?

And was there no poetry in him, too, as he came wearied along Thoresby dyke, in the quiet autumn eve, home to the house of his forefathers, and saw afar off the knot of tall poplars rising over the broad misty flat, and the one great abele tossing its sheets of silver in the dying gusts, and knew that they stood before his father's door? Who can tell all the pretty child-memories which flitted across his brain at that sight, and made him forget that he was a wounded cripple? There is the dyke where he and his brothers snared the great pike which stole the ducklings—how many years ago? while pretty little Patience stood by trembling, and shrieked at each snap of the brute's wide jaws; and there, down that long dark lode, ruffling with crimson in the sunset breeze, he and his brothers skated home in triumph with Patience when his uncle died. What a day that was! when, in the clear, bright winter noon, they laid the gate upon the ice, and tied the beef-bones under the four corners, and packed little Patience on it.—How pretty she looked, though her eyes were red with weeping, as she peeped out from among the heap of blankets and horse-hides, and how merrily their long fen-runners whistled along the ice-lane, between the high banks of sighing reed, as they towed home their new treasure in triumph, at a pace like the race-horse's, to the dear old home among the poplar trees. And now he was going home to meet her, after

a mighty victory, a deliverance from heaven, second only in his eyes to that Red-sea one. Was there no poetry in his heart at that thought? Did not the glowing sunset, and the reed-beds which it transfigured before him into sheets of golden flame, seem tokens that the glory of God was going before him in his path? Did not the sweet clamour of the wild-fowl, gathering for one rich pæan ere they sank into rest, seem to him as God's bells chiming him home in triumph, with peals sweeter and bolder than those of Lincoln or Peterborough steeple-house? Did not the very lapwing, as she tumbled softly wailing, before his path, as she did years ago, seem to welcome the wanderer home in the name of heaven?

Fair Patience, too, though she was a Puritan, yet did not her cheek flush, her eye grow dim, like any other girl's, as she saw far off the red-coat, like a sliding spark of fire, coming slowly along the strait fen-bank, and fled up stairs into her chamber to pray, half that it might be, half that it might not be he? Was there no happy storm of human tears and human laughter when he entered the courtyard gate? Did not the old dog lick his Puritan hand as lovingly as if it had been a Cavalier's? Did not lads and lasses run out shouting? Did not the old yeoman father hug him, weep over him, hold him at arm's length, and hug him again, as heartily as any other John Bull, even though the next moment he called all to kneel down and thank Him who had sent his boy home again, after bestowing on him the grace to bind kings in chains and nobles with links of iron, and contend to death for the faith delivered to the saints? And did not Zeal-for-Truth look about as wistfully for Patience as any other man would have done, longing to see her, yet not daring even to ask

for her? And when she came down at last, was she the less lovely in his eyes because she came, not flaunting with bare bosom, in tawdry finery and paint, but shrouded close in coif and pinner, hiding from all the world beauty which was there still, but was meant for one alone, and that only if God willed, in God's good time? And was there no faltering of their voices, no light in their eyes, no trembling pressure of their hands, which said more, and was more, ay, and more beautiful in the sight of Him who made them, than all Herrick's Dianemes, Waller's Saccharissas, flames, darts, posies, love-knots, anagrams, and the rest of the insincere cant of the court? What if Zeal-for-Truth had never strung two rhymes together in his life? Did not his heart go for inspiration to a loftier Helicon, when it whispered to itself, 'My love, my dove, my undefiled, is but one,' than if he had filled pages with sonnets about Venuses and Cupids, love-sick shepherds and cruel nymphs?

And was there no poetry, true idyllic poetry, as of Longfellow's 'Evangeline' itself, in that trip round the old farm next morning; when Zeal-for-Truth, after looking over every heifer, and peeping into every sty, would needs canter down by his father's side to the horse-fen, with his arm in a sling; while the partridges whirred up before them, and the lurchers flashed like grey snakes after the hare, and the colts came whinnying round, with staring eyes and streaming manes, and the two chatted on in the same sober businesslike English tone, alternately of 'The Lord's great dealings' by General Cromwell, the pride of all honest fen-men, and the price of troop-horses at the next Horncastle fair?

Poetry in those old Puritans? Why not? They

were men of like passions with ourselves. They loved, they married, they brought up children; they feared, they sinned, they sorrowed, they fought—they conquered. There was poetry enough in them, be sure, though they acted it like men, instead of singing it like birds.

THE AGRICULTURAL CRISIS.*

'THERE is a certain immorality,' said Mr. Carlyle of the Corn-Laws seven years ago, 'a certain immorality, where there is not a necessity, in speaking about things finished; in chopping into small pieces the already slashed and slain. When the brains are out, why does not a solecism die?' But, alas! the Corn-Law solecism does not die. Even though buried, and got safely out of sight, as we hope, for ever, it still keeps muttering out of its grave, in querulous confused ejaculations, Cassandra-prophecies of vengeance and ruin, and entreaties to be allowed to rise again, if but for a few weeks, to set forth certain important arguments which it unfortunately forgot to urge during its lifetime. The press teems still with Protectionist pamphlets, demonstrations that Mr. Caird is mad, Mr. Huxtable is mad, Liebig is mad, political economists are mad, all England mad; exhortations to idleness

* THE NORTH BRITISH REVIEW, No. XXVII.—1. 'The Present Prices.' By the Rev. A. Huxtable. London, 1849.—2. 'Mr. Huxtable and his Pigs.' By Porcius. Edinburgh, 1850.—3. 'High Farming the best Substitute for Protection.' By J. Caird, of Baldoon. Edinburgh, 1849.—4. 'Caird's High Farming Harrowed.' Edinburgh, 1850.—5. 'An Appeal to the Common Sense of the Country.' By Professor Low. Edinburgh, 1850.—6. 'Analysis of Evidence before Health of Towns' Commission.' London, 1847.—7. 'Flax versus Cotton.' No I. By Mr. Warnes, of Trimmingham. London, 1849.—8. 'Silk Culture.' By Mrs. Whitby, of Lymington. London, 1849.—9. 'A Word to Farmers on Maize,' &c. By J. Keene. London, 1849.

and despair, sermons on the patriotic duty of proving that free-trade cannot work, by refusing to work it, and doing nothing out of a conscientious spite. To the majority of these productions, Mr. Carlyle's rule will well apply. It would be foreign to the purpose, and indeed to the dignity of this Review, to meddle with them. But when a man like Professor Low of Edinburgh, of known intellect, learning, and character, as well as high official station, comes forward as the champion of this gospel of agricultural despair, and in a pamphlet of more than a hundred closely printed pages, propounds at length a proof of the insanity of three-fourths of her Majesty's subjects, he requires a patient and respectful hearing, and, if possible, a careful and earnest refutation. His pamphlet, going forth with professorial authority from Edinburgh, the capital city of that part of Great Britain which has been always foremost in agriculture, will be taken by hundreds of farmers and landowners as a scientific justification of their own terror, wilful laziness, and idle threats (for the thing has reached that pass) of rebellion. In short, it is calculated to do infinite harm, whereof if we can counteract a part, we shall consider this Journal as not having existed in vain for the cause of justice and civilization.

But we do not wish merely to answer Professor Low's negative by a counter negative, merely to reaffirm that free-trade is not wrong, in answer to his assertion that it is not right. There is distress among the farmers; there is a perplexity as to the future methods of British farming; and we are bound, if we take upon ourselves to reform those who wish to write 'impossible' on all future agriculture, to show the grounds of our hope, and some, at least, of the methods in which that hope may be realized.

Most of the pamphlets on both sides of this controversy are, as we have before said, of a kind with which neither this Review, nor its readers, nor free-trade, have much to do, being merely special pleadings pro and con, with this advantage on the side of the free-trade pamphlets, that they aim at a positive, their opponents at a merely negative result. It is something to prove that pigs can be fatted, or corn grown, under Free-trade, though only in one particular case, as Mr. Huxtable and Mr. Caird profess to do: while it is nothing to refute their particular assertions, or to prove that in any one individual case despair and impotence are the only outlook. You may prove a law by proving one example; you cannot disprove it by disproving one. Mr. Caird of Baldoon may have (in our opinion he has) quoted an exceptional case; every farm has not, like the one he instances, an unlimited command of sea-weed; potatoe culture on a large scale is not a desirable thing, even if the potatoes are sound (which indeed they pertinaciously refuse to be). Mr. Caird's statistics may be, as his opponents say, utterly ideal, and their own also; but what of that? Ginger shall be hot in the mouth still. There are other hopeful farmers besides Mr. Caird, other crops besides potatoes, other manures besides sea-weed. Or 'thinkest thou' that because Mr. Huxtable's pig-bill shows a deficit, 'there shall be no more cakes and ale?' Britain is not come to that pass, surely, that her only salvation is to be fat bacon, much less her destruction the want thereof, or rather not want thereof, pigs being as greedy and fatable under Free-trade, strange to say, as they were under Protection, but want of 'Farmers' profits' thereon.

'But the facts—the facts!' cry the Protectionists; 'look at our ledgers, our statistical proofs of loss and

ruin.' Well, one man's figures are as good as another's, or indeed better, in this case; seeing that from certain causes which will be hereafter noticed, farmers have been in the perennial habit of parading their losses rather than their gains. But really, without undervaluing statistics, we care very little for these half-page-of-figure arguments. 'There is no romance,' it has been well said, 'like the romance of statistics'—the art of 'combler les numeros,' of 'cooking returns,' by which the most utterly contradictory propositions can be proved with equal certainty, and Bianchi and Neri can go on refuting each other unrefuted to all eternity, by a simple process, namely that the Bianchi shall use all the facts which look white, and the Neri all those which look black. The truth is, in statistics, as in every other physical science, a little learning is a dangerous thing. An enormous number of facts must be collated before anything like a safe general law can be deduced from them. The man of genius may, indeed, hit off instinctively a world-wide law from a single phenomenon; but he will keep it to himself for years, rack and torture it by every possible mode of verification, before he gives it to the world. With quacks and sciolists, who, from half a dozen phenomena jump at a conclusion, or rather tack on to them the conclusion which they had already determined to find —with them theories are as plentiful as blackberries, and each man's small ledger of facts proves—all he wanted to prove, at least. In proportion to a man's real inductive genius, whether in chemistry, anatomy, or any other inductive science, will be his cautious and reverent abstinence from hasty generalization; and statistics, the science of deducing social and commercial laws from numerical returns, is as deep and broad a science as any other, requiring, like them, continual

self-distrust, continual watchfulness lest effects be attributed to wrong causes, continual suspicion of unperceived influences at work; the energies of a whole mind, and the labour of a whole life. Some such statisticians we have; and it is at least note-worthy that they—our Seniors, Porters, Mills, Chadwicks, and Peels—have one and all decided for Free-trade. Under the wing of their authority, no man need be driven to his wit's end by an anonymous half-page of figures, by Porcius, or Cato the Censor, or any other antique Roman. We do not doubt these latter gentlemen's honesty—or that of their opponents either; but it would require far more knowledge of their facts than they have given, or indeed can give, to the public, before we can tell whether they have not omitted some particulars, not perhaps of expense, but of causes of expense, which make their pounds-shillings-and-pence experience just as partial and exceptional as they would prove their adversaries' to be.

It is quite refreshing, after these petty tornados of statistical dust-cloud, wherein the facts are the dust, and the wind which moves them some prejudice or opinion which, right or wrong, is utterly independent of them, to turn to Professor Low's 'Appeal to the Common Sense of the Country,' and there find the whole question argued as it ought to be, on the broad ground of reason.

We say, of reason, because we presume that Professor Low attaches this meaning to the term 'Common Sense.' It has too often a lower meaning. It is often loosely applied to the vulgar prejudices and mere animal experiences of the many; but these Professor Low must feel, as long as hunger is a fact, and dinner a necessity of the animal man, to be à priori absolutely in favour of free-trade, or any other means whereby

the maximum of dinners can be attained. But if by common sense be meant the universal practical Reason, which is given alike to every man, in proportion as he is a man and not a brute, which is the same for all times, circumstances, and places—then that is the very ground on which we most joyfully meet him, as we think the only ground worthy of so great a question; and leaving the ledger-dust behind us, we will ask, with Professor Low,—Is Free-trade Rational or Absurd, Right or Wrong?

We had thought, certainly, that the 'common sense' of Britain had already been appealed to on that point; and had given its verdict thereon in some such form as this:—

'Necessaries are dearer or cheaper in proportion as there is less or more of them. You want protection, because it makes corn dearer, by keeping out foreign corn; in a word, by allowing less corn to be in England. Is not that it?

'Well, then, if there is less corn in England than there might be, less bread will be eaten. Then either every one must eat less, or some must go without and be hungry. Now, as a fact, the working classes live on bread; and those who can afford it buy all they need at any price for themselves. They cannot stint themselves as long as they have a penny left: and so those who cannot afford bread enough to live on, starve. These men really exist. If you go into any of our great cities, and a large proportion of agricultural parishes, you may see them; not a fiction of free-traders, but live people, who have not bread enough to eat, and who could have enough, or something nearer enough, if bread was cheaper. Is not that common sense? Now we cannot have these people starving. Common sense tells us that is wrong. Fact tells us, too,

that the more they starve, down to the very edge of famine, the faster they breed. And common sense tells us, that the faster they breed the more they will starve; and tells us also, that a time will come, when between numbers and starvation they will begin (as indeed they seem more and more inclined to do daily) to eat, in default of bread, us and you. Is not that common sense?'

'But,' answered the Protectionists, 'cheap bread will make low wages, and so the poor will be as ill off as ever.'

'Not so,' quoth British common sense, 'for wages both fall and rise more slowly than the price of bread. They depend first on the numbers competing for work, and next on the price of other necessaries as well as bread—on rent, candles, soap, clothing; matters which cheap bread will cheapen. But even if their price remained the same, the minimum which a labourer will accept as wages depends not on bread alone, but on the combined prices of all his necessaries, and on his competing numbers. And therefore, just as when bread rises, the farmers never raise wages in the same ratio, so when bread falls they will not be able—no employer will be able—to lower wages in the same ratio, but in a less one; competition will settle that; if he does his men will not work for him. And, therefore, even if wages fall, the poor will be better off.'

'But,' answered the Protectionists, 'labourers will be thrown out of employ, and get no wages at all.'

'If you mean,' answered British common sense, 'that you will throw your own labourers out of employ, take care that Britain does not throw you out of employ in return. If you cannot cultivate the land profitably, it does not follow that no one else can. There is capital, science, and physical strength in England in plenty, and land too, for that matter, we had thought. Under our

present commercial system we make money too fast for our own profit. It will be no more unprofitable, perhaps far more profitable, for us to get rid of our surplus capital by sinking it in uncertain agricultural speculations, which at all events will produce more food, than it is to sink it as we do now, in profitless railroads and repudiated loans. But even if we be wrong in our hope, it is better that the inferior soils go uncultivated, than that the masses go hungry. We have plenty of occupation, plenty of capital, to employ the discharged labourers.'

'But you will make England dependent on foreign countries; and what if they went to war with us?'

The more we depend on them for corn, the more their capitalists, that is, their real rulers just now, will depend on us for profit; and, therefore, the less likely they will be to go to war. Besides, Britain is the queen of the seas; and even in the sharpest blockades of the late war, she found no difficulty in importing as much corn as you allowed her. How much more now, when our fleets are stronger, our commerce vaster, our colonies in every part of the globe rapidly becoming producers, as well as consumers?

'Besides,' quoth British common sense, 'Free-trade cannot injure us. What is right cannot go wrong, as long as God, and not the devil, rules the world. And Free-trade is right; Protection is wrong; every law or system which upholds one class to the injury of another, the few to the injury of the many, which actually, as in Great Britain now, diminishes the labourers' meals, and causes human beings to go hungry, is unjust and suicidal. Artificially insufficient food is an evil to the labourer, and therefore also to the farmer, and to every other class; for we are all brothers, members of one body, with one common interest, and

not, as demagogues and protectionists alike assert, contradictory class-interests; if one member suffers, all the others suffer with it; especially if the suffering members be as now the motive limbs. For on the welfare of the working classes, physical and spiritual, depends the commonweal of the whole. From them the higher ranks are continually recruited; on their vigour of body, intellect, and spirit, depend ultimately the productive power of the nation, without which capital, however enormous, must be idle and dead, or run to waste, as it has done so often in eastern despotisms; and anything which, like dear food, depresses them, the foundation-tier of the social pyramid, depresses in exactly the same proportion every tier above it. Thus, just as in the extreme case, the existence of a slave population works the certain degradation and ruin, even the physical extinction of the free class which employs them, so does the existence of a needy, reckless, debauched, discontented and beggarly peasantry, such as disgraced France before the Revolution of 1793, and disgraces, alas! too many British counties now, avenge itself by increasing the very evils which have produced it, by making the farmer still more penurious, ignorant, and tyrannical—the landlord more neglectful, fastidious, profligate. God's laws are just, and avenge themselves.'

Some such thoughts as these, dim and dumb perhaps, for we British are more given to do than to talk the wise thing, have already passed through the public mind, and found their practical utterance in the repeal of the Corn-Laws. Professor Low is as hasty in his facts, as he is uncharitable in his imputations, when he represents the Anti-Corn-Law agitation as a mere selfish trick of the commercial classes, an out-growth of the 'pedlar-spirit' against which he declaims so fiercely. If there had been no more than that in the hearts

(there was certainly in the words) of such men as Bright and Cobden, we believe their movement would have had a very different fate. These men may have confused the righteousness of their object with its profitableness; they may have often appealed to lower motives, and to arguments which we should reprobate; but what gave them their strength was not that, but the consciousness, both in them and in their hearers, that they were doing a right thing—that they were, in the very deepest sense, making an 'appeal to the common sense of the country.' Therefore they arrayed on their side (a fact which Professor Low utterly ignores) not merely the commercial classes, but tithe-holding clergymen, who knew that free-trade must ultimately reduce their incomes; barristers and littérateurs, who cared nothing for political economy, and still less for trade; and the artizans of the great cities, who would have fought on barricades in the cause of free-trade at the very moment that they were sneering and growling at Mr. Cobden's harangues—'Cheap bread! curse him, he means cheap wages!'

Professor Low, then, is not, as he fancies, appealing from a lower to a higher court, but demanding, rather contrary to rule, a fresh trial in the same court with the same jury. However, if a judgment be wrong, we cannot be too ready to revoke it; or too hasty, if half of Professor Low's fears be correct; at all events, we are bound to give a fair hearing, and if possible, a fair answer, when a grave and well-read man deliberately utters, in a large and laborious pamphlet, Cassandra-prophecies of the approaching ruin and bankruptcy of the richest and almost the best-manned nation of the globe.

The pamphlet opens, of course, with an attack on Sir Robert Peel; which, as it was written before his death, we shall pass over. The British people have

already pronounced a different verdict on that distinguished statesman.

The next forty pages of this 'Appeal' to our common sense are taken up with vituperative attacks on political economists, and their theory of rents, as first propounded by Dr. J. Anderson, and since recognised, with modifications and improvements, by all writers of note on that subject. Nothing in Professor Low's pages appears to us to invalidate the received theory, much to corroborate it; as an appeal to common sense it must be useless, as it deals with abstruse propositions of commercial science in a way less comprehensible to the multitude than the profound writings of Chalmers or Mill; the thread of argument is most desultory, and often impalpable; the spirit full of animosity, sneers, reckless imputations of motives, things which are usually considered to interfere with the exercise of common sense, by creating prejudices of every kind, first against the objects of the attack, and then against the writer who approaches open questions in so fierce and unfair a spirit. The large space devoted to the attempt to upset the received theory of rents, leaves on the reader's mind the old unavoidable conclusion to which 'common sense' had probably brought him long ago, that the Protection in whose behalf all these rent-arguments are undertaken, is mainly a device for keeping those rents up.

Professor Low does not, indeed, deny this. He considers the height of rents as the index of agricultural prosperity: he therefore seems, as far as we can discover his meaning, to think that the way to secure prosperity is to keep rents up—very much like securing a fine day by nailing up the hand of the weather-glass. But we will let the subject pass. Professor Low's whole attack is aimed against Adam Smith,

Ricardo, and the earlier schools. He seems to ignore the existence of such men as Senior, Porter, Mill, and Chalmers, and the improved and enlarged views which they have grounded on the discoveries of their predecessors. This may be a safe and easy method, but it simply reduces his whole argument to a paralogism; he puts himself in the position of a man who should deny the discoveries of Herschel and Faraday, and assert the absurdity of all inductive science, because he had found hasty and incorrect applications of the primary laws of induction in Bacon's 'Novum Organum' or Boyle's 'Origines.'

We shall therefore proceed to consider a little that small proportion of Professor Low's pamphlet which really does bear on the comparative effects of Free-trade and Protection on agriculture and the industrious classes; among which latter, by the bye, he seems to include, somewhat strangely, landlords, simply in their quality of rent-receivers. And now, in answer to all these invectives against every class except those directly dependent on the land, by the epithets of dreamers, theorists, impostors, demagogues, &c. &c., and outcries against the pedlar-spirit which is ruining us; we beg to remind him, that besides 'idola specus et theatri,' the fallacies of the study and of the Anti-Corn-Law oration, there exist, also, just as abundant, and just as pestiferous, 'idola tribus,' class-fallacies, and 'idola fori,' fallacies of the market-place; and that it is well worth his serious thought, whether British agriculture under the protective system has not been as much corrupted and nightmare-ridden by these latter, as any of the objects of his disdain. We boldly assert, that there is hardly a questionable opinion or practice for which the earlier political economists and the manufacturers are commonly blamed, which has not openly

manifested itself in practice among the landlords and farmers of the last five-and-forty years,—with this difference, that the former classes, where they erred, often considered themselves to be doing right, to be acting in accordance with certain fixed and irreversible laws of society; while the farmers fell into the very same error, against their own conscience, and their own loud talk about 'the welfare of the labourer,' and the 'national bulwarks.' Have political economists made an 'eleventh commandment' of the rule 'buy cheap, and sell dear?' Professor Low himself acknowledges it as a dictate of common sense. Have they asserted 'cash-payment to be the only nexus between man and man?' Go through nineteen-twentieths of the agricultural districts of Great Britain, and see whether there is any other nexus, whether they can state the fact in words or not. Have they advocated 'laissez-faire?' Why, they have now repudiated it, and left it to the farmers, who let the poor multiply and grow up any how, uneducated, ill-housed, without any other law to regulate their wages than that very competition, of which it is the fashion to talk, as if political economists, by giving a name, had, forsooth, created it! Why, the only practical interference with the laissez-faire system which has disgraced for the last fifty years the agricultural districts of England, proceeds from the working of that very new Poor-law which Professor Low vituperates as the offspring of Whig political economists. Have they, again, preached against over-population? Whether right or wrong, farmers and landlords have been acting on their theory for many a year—they have prevented the population of their parishes from increasing; they have pulled down cottages, replaced men by sheep over large districts of Scotland (a plan which, if we recollect right,

Professor Low himself has advocated in one of his works); they have driven away not only their surplus hands, but even those they already possessed, to increase the crowded filth and misery of the great cities, and, as in the case of the Dorsetshire labourers, to walk out from the towns four or five miles daily to their work—a process, in our eyes, far less humane than the Malthusian advice not to call the surplus population into existence at all. Above all, if the political economists have, as some say, made an idol of profits, and set them up as the object of production, instead of asserting the maximum of production to be in itself an absolute good,—who have fallen into that error more deeply than the agriculturists? What was Protection itself, but an attempt to keep up prices, utterly independent of, even, as we shall attempt to show, at the expense of, production? Why, what is the key-note of Professor Low's own pamphlet, but prices, prices,—Prices, the great fetish of the agriculturist? Because they have fallen, England is to be ruined; because they have fallen, even though every poor man in England is benefited by their fall, Professor Low refuses to be comforted, and summons all British farmers around him, to drink of the luxury of despair. If this is not the pedlar-spirit, what is, in the name of common sense? Truly those who live in glass-houses should throw no stones.

But Professor Low denies that the poor are benefited. The decay of certain small manufacturers in certain small towns, affords him an argument to the contrary, quite sufficient to countervail the fact, that for one hand thrown out of employment by such decay—which, be it remembered, began before free-trade existed—a hundred new hands have been finding employment in other branches of manufacture. He then goes on to

assert, after the fashion of Protectionists, that the labouring-classes have thriven under Protection and are suffering under Free-trade. How far this latter assertion is true we shall see shortly; as to the former, we do not deny that a large proportion of the peasantry of Scotland and Northumbria have been lately in a thriving state, though whether their condition is on the whole better than it was sixty years ago is a questionable point. But if they are thriving they do not owe it to Protection. They owe it to the neighbourhood of manufactories; to the superior energy and good sense both of themselves and of their employers, to the remnant of those social bonds between master and man, long hirings and permanent interest in the farm, often accompanied by indirect association to part of the profits, which have disappeared throughout the greater part of Britain, under the influence of that very 'pedlar-spirit' which Professor Low supposes is confined to the manufacturers. It is in the south and centre of England—in, it is to be feared, the larger portion of it—that the normal effect of the Protective system on the labouring class must be studied; in England, where a Poor-law has allowed the farmer to realize 'cash payment, the only nexus between man and man,' by giving him compulsory rates to fall back upon as a remedy—a poisonous remedy—for the ruinous effects of his own short-sighted greed.

We entreat, therefore, our readers to give no heed to the appeal ad misericordiam on behalf of the labourer in which Professor Low indulges. The facts are against him, so astoundingly, indeed, that we cannot conceive how he can have had the courage to quote them. He vents himself in a violent tirade against the new Poor-law as the creation of Free-traders He represents the workhouses of England as overflow-

ing with able-bodied paupers—'prisoners,' as he calls them, though, in fact, no able-bodied pauper can be kept in the workhouse a day after he demands his liberation; and then complains bitterly of the Free-traders for insulting the farmers, because they 'avail themselves of the good which political economy promised them,' by which expression is signified their having, in their panic at Free-trade, driven the labourers into the workhouse instead of employing them; and then ends with the astounding assertion, that up to the period of Free-trade the labouring-classes have been 'till now quiet, contented, and in full employment.' Rick-burning, indeed, he has heard of; for he has informed us that it was recommenced in consequence of the repeal of the Corn-laws, the cause, as he asserts, of the whole of the labourers' present misery—'Commenced,' he should have said, to make his assertion worth anything for his argument. But that unlucky 're' opens a vista back into the times of Protection, which he seems strangely to have ignored. It is true the rick-burning recommenced last autumn in Berkshire and some southern counties; it is true also that it recommenced professedly and notoriously in revenge for the farmers' arbitrary dismissal of their labourers in that very cowardly Protectionist panic which Professor Low wishes to perpetuate; and it is true also that it has now utterly ceased in consequence of the content and comfort which has been brought about by Professor Low's bugbear of bread at tenpence the gallon. Why, rick-burning is the very first-begotten of Protection; it arises, professedly, from the labourers taking the farmers at their word, when they say that high prices, and not the maximum of produce, are their true interest. The labourer has been taught by Protection that he has no share in the corn he reaps,

that its plenty can be no blessing to him, that its scarcity, strange paradox, may be a blessing. He regards it not as something which is sent to feed him, but to minister to the wealth of a class which he hates and fears—and therefore he burns it; therefore he has in many counties fallen into a perennial madness of burning it, ever since the Corn-laws of 1815. Of all fearful pests in this bewildered time, rick-burning is the very one about which Protection will be wise in saying little.

It is true, too, that the number of able-bodied paupers was increased during the free-trade panic. But it is true, also, that those 'prisoners' have been since released under the pressure of two facts, one politico-economical, and the other physical, which Professor Low has overlooked; the first is, that the farmers have found it impossible to depress wages permanently below their real value, as determined by the competition of the labour-market; the second is, that farmers' horses, like those of the Egyptians of old, 'are flesh and not spirit,' and having no inclination to plough and harrow of their own accord, have required their usual complement of men to perform those offices; and the farms throughout England having been in the vast majority of cases considerably under-manned under the late protective system, the dismissed labourers have been taken on again under penalty of leaving the land uncultivated; and finally, the fact is, that the able-bodied paupers alone throughout England, instead of increasing, have diminished this very year by upwards of 50,000; whereof, as the 'Times' significantly enough points out, some of those agricultural counties which were the strongholds of Protection, have contributed more than their fair proportion; while the labourers throughout the south of England, are one and all, strange to relate,

blessing the effects of Free-trade with all their hearts and souls.

And it is true, also, however Professor Low may overlook the fact, that there were able-bodied paupers by thousands in the English workhouses, long before free-trade, or the sliding-scale either, were in existence; and that the farmers, in spite of the comforts of protection, had for the most part no compunction whatsoever in carrying out the severity of the new Poor-law. Is Professor Low aware that nine-tenths of the agricultural Poor-law guardians throughout England have been from the first, not 'pedlar-minded' manufacturers, but protectionist farmers? Why, was it not under Protection that the necessity for the new Poor-law grew up? We are no admirers of any Poor-law whatsoever; but if any such system were to exist, surely anything was better than that dung-heap of anomalous abominations, which Dr. Chalmers was the first to expose. Was it under free-trade, or under protection, that the parish poor-houses became nests of bastardy, pauperism, profligacy, and brutality, which vied with the worst wynds of Glasgow and St. Giles? Was it under free-trade that a woman became a match and a fortune in proportion to her number of bastard children? Was it under free-trade that thousands of Englishmen sat day after day uselessly stone-breaking by the road-side, earning at that unproductive parish employment, if they had but the full complement of half-starved and uneducated children, more money than they could have done by honest farm-labour? Was it under free-trade that the number and burden of paupers increased to so enormous an extent, that some parishes actually began to be thrown out of cultivation,—the rates swallowing up the whole profits of the land? Was it under free-trade that the reckless

multiplication of the labourers was not only not checked, but even encouraged? Was it under free-trade that there grew up, in almost every parish in England, a corps de reserve of houseless, masterless savages, supported partly by parish rates, partly by hopeless wanderings after employment in other districts, and partly (for this is the real reason why their existence is encouraged) to supply the farmers' need of extra hands in harvest time, and then be thrown off again to wander, pilfer, and starve? Was it under free-trade that the old custom of hiring labourers by the year, of lodging them in the farm-house, and treating them as members of the family, died out through nine-tenths of England? Was it under free-trade, or under the influence of the unnaturally high prices of protected corn, that the farmer discountenanced every attempt to introduce a wholesomer and cheaper food for the masses than the white bread, destitute of phosphates, to which the English labourer clings with such pertinacious folly? that he was careless of attempting the cultivation of anything but wheat, and careless generally of cultivating that properly?—that he was tempted to take two or three farms, with no more capital, and often with no more labour, than he had formerly invested in one?—that every ignoramus, retired shopkeeper, or what not, began to think himself capable of turning farmer, and investing (often enough to his own ruin) his little savings in the easy business of growing deficient crops of weedy wheat —at protectionist prices? Was it under free-trade that the Eastern Counties saw the rise of the abominable gang-system, where, amid oaths, ribaldry, and pollution, strings of boys and girls, hired from their degraded and half-fed parents, are driven to work under the smart of the taskmaster's stick? Was it under free-trade, in a word, that all England and Wales, and a great part of

Scotland, witnessed the almost entire extermination of yeomen and peasant proprietors? Was it under free-trade that there arose in England the practice of general almsgiving—of making up for deficient wages in every parish by clothes clubs, shoe clubs, gifts of this and of that from charitable gentry; till the squire's and the parson's gifts, like the sportula of old Rome, are expected as a right by a peasantry which has lost all sense of independence? Was it under free-trade, or under the forty-five years of corn-law monopoly, that there arose the present deep, sullen discontent* of that class whom Professor Low calls quiet and contented? Quiet and contented? Look in their faces, sullen, averted, suspicious, spiritless, whose

> hungry eyes
> Glare dumb reproach, and old perplexity
> Too stale for words,

—and judge for yourself. Look at their homes, which the last forty-five years have handed over to the farmers' possession, and see whether they ought to be contented; worse housed than the horses they dress, the pigs they feed. You hear no complaints—no. Englishmen are no babblers; they are a dumb, dogged people, to whom misery has become a thing inevitable, elementary, like the rain and hail; but you see, now and then, in Fen-riots, Dorsetshire riots, Essex rick-burnings, South Devon communism, Kentish Thom-fanaticism, their usually unspoken opinion of the present system, boiling up to the surface in shapes which make wise men tremble. We do not say Protection has been the cause of all this: Protection is but the brother, and not the father, of many of these evils. They spring all of them from that very pedlar-spirit, the greedy worship of money, which some men as uncharitably as untruly

* Ten years of free-trade have, thank Heaven, altered this very much in those parts of England which I know.

fancy confined to political economists and manufacturers. But if Protection be only their brother, it has been a fostering and encouraging elder brother; and the vice which it has not created, it has legalized and protected, by stamping the idolatry of prices with the sanction of legislation, and teaching the farmer that his rulers, as well as himself, believed the object of his existence to be profits, and not production.

So much for the labour question. Let us pass on to agriculture itself.

Professor Low makes, of course, the old stock assertion, that British agriculture has flourished through the agency of Protection; and he enters into an historical summary of the last sixty years, which, we suppose, is designed to prove this point, as he cannot intend it to be entirely irrelevant to it, still less to disprove it,—which nevertheless it unintentionally does. But first, we would ask him—if he defines agriculture to mean the cultivation of the land, and not the profits of the farmer—in what single point has Protection improved the former? Did Protection introduce root crops from the Continent, or teach the sowing of clover and artificial grasses? Did Protection inspire Mr. Bakewell or Mr. Ellwood with courage to make the costly and uncertain experiments by which they improved our live stock? Did Protection create a Parkinson, an Arthur Young, an Elkington? Professor Low must surely be aware that the real rise of British husbandry dates from a period anterior to those very Corn-Laws, their dependence on which he would insinuate. But Scotch agriculture has flourished under Protection. Why, then, has not English flourished in like proportion? A like cause should produce like effects. Why, then, are vast sheets of country all over England, in Devonshire especially, equal in soil, and superior in climate, to

some of the best tilled districts of North Britain, lying still under the primæval curse of thorns and thistles, savagery and waste? Professor Low is unjust to the genius of his own nation. North British agriculture owes its existence not merely to the neighbourhood of manufactories causing a peculiar demand for field-produce, but to the superior shift and thrift of its semi-Norse population; to their persevering energy, their prudence, their capability of adapting themselves to circumstances; and, above all, to their intelligent readiness to seize and apply every fresh discovery of that very science which Professor Low derides and insults. We have a faith in the Northern farmer which Professor Low seems not to have. We believe that he will prove himself equal to this emergency, as he has to former ones; that he will apply the discoveries of Boussingault and Liebig as promptly and gallantly as he has those of Tull, Bakewell, and Smith of Deanston; that he will lead the van of the agriculture of the future, as he has led that of the agriculture of the past, and show that the energy which has conquered India, and filled the world with the Norse race, is not the weakly suckling of an artificial system, which needs for its own support the hunger of the masses.

In considering Professor Low's sketch of the history of prices since 1795, we must bring to bear upon his facts a rule of logic which he himself uses in another part of his pamphlet, confessing it to be 'as trite a reflection as ever writer was compelled to make,' viz., 'that an event or phenomenon may correspond entirely or nearly with the changes of another event or phenomenon, and yet not be the cause of that phenomenon;' in one word, that post hoc ergo propter hoc is no argument; and hence is no more an argument in the case of war-prices than (as he employs it most

illogically) in the case of mine rents. It is curious, in the first place, that every fact which he states (in pages 52 to 54) to prove that Protection has been the cause of agricultural prosperity, attributes, on the very face of it, that prosperity to quite other causes. The common farmer's expression of 'war prices' is a key to all Professor Low's fallacies on the subject. How he can have avoided seeing this from his own facts we can hardly understand; for he himself asserts, that the prices of 1795 to 1814 were 'created by events which we cannot expect to occur again.' The case is plainly exceptional. 'During the war itself, six years of unusually deficient produce had occurred, namely, those which succeeded the crops of 1795, 1799, 1800, 1804, 1808, and 1809;' and, after the year 1804, 'unusual difficulties were imposed on our intercourse with those countries from which we drew our chief supplies of grain;' in a word, the supply of food was inadequate; while, on the other hand (we still quote Professor Low), 'from the year 1801 to the year 1811 inclusive, above a million and a half of souls were added to our population; the wages of labour during all this time were great, and the demand was constant and increasing. We had prisoners of war to maintain in numbers equal to a great army, and numerous troops to support in distant stations; and more persons in proportion to our population—as militiamen, volunteers, and otherwise—bore arms among us, than in the most warlike of the states opposed to us, for the maintenance of whom greater expense of food was required than would have been, had each depended entirely on his own labour for support; and a great sum was continually expended on the purchase of stores of all kinds, the produce of the mother country.' In short, there was an extraordinary and abnormal demand for food, with a comparatively

inadequate supply; in consequence of which, of course, prices ranged extraordinarily high, and farmers became rapidly rich,—altogether a peculiar diseased state of things, to be abhorred rather than desired, though at the time its intrinsic rottenness was concealed by the fact, that the agricultural labourer did not suffer from the high prices of corn, because the militia, our foreign armies and navies, and the immense demand for labour in the manufacturing districts, which were just developing themselves into their present greatness, so thinned their ranks year by year, that their labour demanded a factitious price in a temporarily understocked labour-market. Now, we simply ask, what has this abnormal state of affairs to do with permanent agricultural protection in times of peace? And what does it prove with regard to legislative protection, except its utter incompetence to keep farmers' profits permanently at that height which they demand? For mark the sequel:—

> On the conclusion of the war on the eventful field of Waterloo, or soon afterwards, these causes of enhanced prices ceased to act, and the exchangeable value of raw produce fell to rates which had not for a number of years before been known. Very quickly distress manifested itself among the tenant farmers. Although almost to the close of the war the agriculturists had been in a state of prosperity, they could not, even many of those amongst them who had capital to spare, bear up against so great and sudden a change in the price of their commodities; while the cost of labour, and other charges to which they were subject, remained for a time as before. Great suffering was accordingly endured, and a heavy loss sustained of the earnings of previous years. Many industrious men were altogether ruined, and years elapsed before even the more prosperous recovered from the effects of the losses which they had suffered.—p. 53.

We appeal to the common sense of our readers whether the confession contained in this paragraph is not frightful; whether it does not justify utterly and at first sight our strong expressions about the diseased and rotten state of agricultural economics during the late war? One had been taught in childhood—one

had read in the Bible, aye, read in heathen books even, that war was a curse and not a blessing. One had been accustomed to think that peace was the harbinger of plenty and prosperity; that it was a time to be desired and not to be dreaded, when men should 'beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into reaping-hooks.' One had heard mystic words uttered long ago, which connected 'abundance of peace as long as the moon endureth,' with 'heaps of corn high on the mountain tops,' and 'the deliverance of the poor, and him that hath no helper;' and one had dreamt—but it must have been a child's fancy—that those words were inspired, eternal, to fulfil themselves again and again in every age, according as men obeyed more and more the laws of God, and shaped society more and more after that ideal which His book of books reveals . . . . But we were mistaken. Peace, we find, is the bringer of 'great suffering, and heavy loss of the earnings of previous years'—a ruiner of 'industrious men to such an extent that years had to elapse before even the more prosperous recovered from the effects of the losses they had suffered'—by the cessation of the yearly slaughter of tens of thousands of their countrymen; of villanous commissariat gambling: of wheat thrown into the Thames to keep up prices; of large fortunes made rapidly to be squandered by a just and awful Nemesis in soulless profligacy, leaving the beggared descendants, as may be seen throughout the eastern counties of England at this moment, monuments of the righteous judgments of Him who visiteth the sins of the fathers on the children; and of all the rest of that ideal farmers' Paradise, so often succinctly and honestly toasted in those palmy days as 'A bloody war and a wet harvest.'

But, alas! all fair things must fade; and when that ideal faded, then came out the intrinsic rottenness of

the whole system, the intrinsic inability of legislative protection to enable the farmer to live on the minimum of produce at the maximum of price, without the further help of two other guardian angels—scarcity and slaughter. Though those benignant angels had fled, yet still 'high protective duties were in existence, not on corn only, but on every foreign commodity which could interfere with the products of native labour. No foreign corn was permitted at this time to be brought into the country until the price of wheat was 63*s.* a quarter, and that of other grain in the same proportion. This was not considered sufficient to protect the farmer under the new and anomalous'—(so war is to be the normal, peace the anomalous condition of agriculture! What a confession, in one word, of the whole of our argument!)—'condition in which he was placed; and the Legislature, after a long inquiry, increased the duties of import by a new law passed in 1815.' Of the results of that system we have spoken already.

If any additional proofs were wanting of the way in which Protectionist superstitions tend to paralyse the energies of the farmer, and retard the march of scientific agriculture, we need seek no further than Professor Low's own observations on the various remedies which have been proposed for the present distress of the farmer. The advice to have recourse only to superior soils, he rejects, as we do, though from different reasons. What right, however, he has to blame political economists for giving that advice we really cannot see. All they have said is,—'If, as you confess, profits are your sole object, all you have to do is what in practice you have been always doing, to scramble for the fat farms and leave the lean ones to those who are unlucky enough to get no better.' Then follows a tirade against agricultural chemistry, which he apparently considers a phantom invented by the Whigs to

delude farmers with insane hopes, through the agency of 'parsons' and 'barons;' Liebig and Huxtable being insulted—really there is no other word for it—as impracticable dreamers, and the existence of any other scientific agriculturists utterly ignored. Liebig's chemistry is proved to be all nonsense, by the fact that dinners were just as well cooked before he investigated the laws of nutrition; and farmers are finally exhorted, in a passage whose effect on English conceit and ignorance will be anything but salutary, to 'be comforted, for they are very good chemists, if they would but think so; and perform every day, in their fields, better chemical operations by far than all the agricultural chemists can perform for them.'

Doubtless they do; or rather, we should say, He who, in His mercy, causes His sun to shine on the evil and the good, performs them for them: the chief chemical operations which, in England at least, farmers perform for themselves, are the exhaustion of soils, and the evaporation of ammonia.

But they are 'practical men,' and therefore 'insulted' by free-traders. That depends very much on the meaning of the word 'practical.' Are not the many unmentioned—perhaps because unmentionable for Professor Low's arguments—practical men? Are not Johnstone, Smith of Deanston, Lawes of Rothampstead, Grey of Dilston, Paine of Farnham,*—are not these practical men? Was not even Liebig, 'Baron' though he be, a practical man when he invented that patent manure, over the failure of which Professor Low is so jubilant, without telling us why it failed? Not because it was not what it professed; not because it did not really contain all the elements of fertility; but simply because its market price proved to be too high for profitable

* Now, alas, lost to science and his country.

use in England. And was not Liebig a still more practical man when he warned England that she had far more truly patent manure, boundless means of fertility, running to waste from every sewer of her crowded cities? We see now what a 'practical man' means: indeed, ten minutes' conversation with the general type of south and mid-English farmers will show any one. It means a man who can practise, not production, but profits; who, whether he has or not the knack of growing corn, has the knack of turning pennies; the test of his practicality is—luckily for his reputation, throughout two-thirds of Great Britain—not in the field, but in the market-room. But, once more, was not Mr. Huxtable, tried even by this test, a somewhat 'practical' man, when he grew two years running five and twenty ton of Swedes per acre on the brow of a bare and utterly soilless chalk down, by applying chemical salts which were the exact equivalents of the crop he required, and that at a less expense than was required by the farmers round to grow a smaller crop on the best of soil? If that be not 'practical,' what is? No subsequent failures in the profit of other experiments can countervail that fact.

We might say much more upon Professor Low's statements. We might justly complain of him for confessing, in a passage (p. 83) which stands out in honourable relief from the rest of his pamphlet, that science may render great help to agriculture, and then, in the very next page, laughing to scorn every attempt of science to fulfil that very expectation. We might justify, too, our suspicions of his inadequate knowledge of the very chemistry which he derides, in his observations on nitrate of soda, and especially in his informing farmers that 'saltpetre,' of all things in the world, is the type of the alkalies. But his most important error is the way in which he both misstates and undervalues the

distinction between the empiric and the scientific stages of an art. In the first, or empiric stage, he says, 'Results only are regarded, and common experience depended on.' He should have said private and particular experience; the experiences of single individuals, of hereditary occupiers, of peculiar localities; and this is the reason why, though, as he truly says, every valuable branch of rural labour has been practised separately in some past age or country, the general agriculture of the world, and even of civilized Britain, remains no better than it is, simply because agriculture has been empiric, and not scientific. We see throughout Britain, in the same parish, on the same soils, the most absurd differences in agricultural productiveness, coupled with a slavish adherence to the empiric maxims of the immediate neighbourhood. We see one farmer looking on idly at his neighbour's increased crops, and excusing himself by saying, 'It does very well on his land, no doubt, but how can I tell that it would do on mine?' How can he tell? Science only can inform him. Or again, we see a man attempting unsuccessfully to apply to an inferior or unsuitable soil a peculiar local mode of cultivation, simply because it is the custom of the neighbourhood. Or again, we find some farmer of a more daring and more speculative turn catching at a new improvement, and fancying it, as empirics do their quack medicines, a cure for every evil in all soils, because it has cured one evil in one particular soil. We speak of matters of common daily occurrence, such as must occur as long as any art remains in its empiric stage. Look at the broad facts of the case. The Chinese have known for centuries the value of sewage manure, and we have long known that they knew it; but the sewage of our great towns still runs wasted to the sea, even as it did of old. Or to come nearer home,

the extraordinary fertility of the sewage-irrigated lands below Edinburgh and Milan has long been notorious: but has there been a general application of the results of those striking facts? In like manner the advantages of deep tillage and row culture have been known since the time of Augustus: yet the majority of crops, in England at least, are sown broad-cast to this day, and the land ploughed on an average not five inches deep. Why is this? Because empiricism can furnish only particular facts, not reasons; local maxims, but not general laws. It is impossible at this stage of any art to execute works on a great scale. The force of despotism may, as in the case of the pyramids, of the royal roads of Peru, or of the canals of Semiramis, compel their execution at an enormous waste of capital, labour, and even human life: but in a free country, where improvements are to be made singly by many individuals, each in his own sphere, each working from his own will and convictions, science is absolutely required, to give to the reason of the many, common and universal laws. This is her true office, and not, as Professor Low says, merely to 'investigate principles, and to explain results, and to make the resources of one branch of knowledge contribute to the advancement of another.' That science will do, indeed, but she will do more. Even if she did not discover a single new fact, she will still, by combining the already existing facts of experience, draw from them inductively rules which each man may apply intelligently and as it were prophetically for himself, calculating on the results of his labour with a moral certainty independent of local or hereditary tradition, of the prejudices of neighbours, and of the panaceas of charlatans. And therefore, even though we were to assent, for the sake of argument, to Professor Low's somewhat rash and startling expecta-

tion, that agriculture has probably left less for science to add to truths already known, than almost any other of the useful arts, science would be not the less indispensable to agriculture. Many nations, to instance a parallel case, had brought the art of weaving to the highest empiric perfection before the introduction of the steam-engine and the spinning-jenny. The East sent to Rome 2000 years ago its 'byssine garments,' and its 'woven wind;' Hindostan produced its long-unrivalled muslins, Belgium its lace; the quality was perfect, but the supply small and local,—when science came, and taking the old materials, applied to them her new methods, she inundated the world with the products of the loom, as she may hereafter with the products of the farm.

Moreover, just in proportion as in any part of Britain agricultural science has improved, in the same proportion has practical agriculture. It is at least a curious coincidence that Scotland, which justly boasts of the best practical farmers and gardeners, also boasts of the best agricultural chemists; we may add, too, the best political economists: but Professor Low will be less inclined than we are to allow any connexion between the incidents.

If there is any one point on which the discoveries of science had ever opened a vista of hope, immediate and practical, it is on that of sewage manure. Professor Low cannot be ignorant of what has been proved on that subject; he cannot be ignorant that the greatest 'practical' farmers, and at their head the late Mr. Smith of Deanston, have definitively pronounced their opinion on this subject, and exerted themselves to get the sewage of the towns applied to the land. But as all we hear of this question in the pages before us is a passing allusion to 'the refuse of towns,' we shall proceed to quote somewhat

from a pamphlet, one among many which have been published on the subject, containing 'An Analysis of Evidence laid before the Health of Towns Commission, and the Select Committee of the House of Commons, on Metropolitan Sewage, and the value and advantage of its Application in a liquid form to Agricultural Purposes.'

It may be said that we knew the value of town sewage before conceited 'science' intruded her information on the point. True: but did we know the facts established by Liebig, Boussingault, Sprengel, and numerous other writers, who give us not merely empiric suspicions, but scientific certainty on the point? We did not know, till chemical analysis proved it, that sewer water contains not only some but all of the elements necessary to fertility. We did not know, till chemical analysis proved it, that each human being returns to the soil, in the form of manure, the exact equivalent of the food which he consumes, in a state fit for immediate absorption by the roots of plants. We did not know, till truly scientific experiments informed us, the following properties, to which our readers, we hope, will be inclined to attach more importance than Professor Low has deigned to do.

1. The very substances which, if allowed to collect and decompose in our great towns (and we may add, in our small villages), give rise to fevers and other destructive diseases, may be made the source of great fertility to the surrounding country. (Southwood Smith. Sanitary Report of 1842. Daubeny, Liebig, Sprengel.)

Thus the sewage-manure-question becomes the correlative of sanitary reform, and in the proper employment of this manure lies one great means of improving the fetid and pestilential dwellings of the lower classes.

2. These same substances, diluted with water, may be conveyed into the country and applied to the land with perfect safety, and less offensively than the manure now in use. (Smith of Deanston. Brande. J. Knight.) If any reader wish for nasal proof, let him, on his next visit to London, inspect the works of those gallant speculators, the Metropolitan Sewage Manure Company, among the market gardens of Fulham.

3. The state of dilution in which the refuse of towns exists in the sewer water, is highly favourable to the growth of plants, and the increase of fertility. (E. Chadwick. J. Knight. Smith of Deanston.)

4. The sewer water, which it is thus proposed to apply, is proved by chemical analysis to contain all the elements of fertility. (Professors Miller, Brand, Cooper, &c.)

5. Sewer water has a high money-value. The value of that now running into the Thames through the sewers of London alone, is, according to Professor Miller, upwards of 400,000*l.* per annum.

In Flanders, says Dr. Playfair, the annual value is estimated at 1*l.* 17*s.* per head of the population. Mr. Smith of Deanston considers 1*l.* per head the average.

From every town of a thousand inhabitants, says Professor Johnston, is carried annually into the sea manure equal to 270 tons of guano, worth at the present price of guano 2700*l.*, and capable of raising an increased produce of not less than 1000 quarters of grain.

Really, after this, the sending some thousand miles to Peru and Ichaboe for what is lying at our own doors, breeding pestilence because we will not use it, is Laputism of the most frantic sort.

6. From very accurate experiments, it is found that an equal produce may be raised by liquid manure at a cheaper rate than by any other, either domestic or

foreign. Smith of Deanston gives the following comparison:—

Cost of manuring one acre with sewage . . .	£0 12 9
* Do. with guano, 2½ cwt. at 8*s.*	1 0 0
Do. farm-yard manure, 15 tons at 4*s.* . . .	3 0 0

So that sewer water is cheaper than guano by 7*s.* 3*d.*, and than farm-yard manure by 2*l.* 7*s.* 3*d.*

7. Striking instances of produce from sewage manure are notorious.

8. There is every reason to believe, that the sewer water will be in large and constant demand at every season of the year. (Mr. Norris, market-gardener at Isleworth; Smith of Deanston, passim; Mr. Macquay.) It is proved by the experience of the Fulham gardeners, that the sewer water has a high value, not only as manure, but simply as rain. The mere power of preventing drought at will, without the enormous expense of hand-watering, is in itself a vast conquest over the brute powers of nature. And we must add to this, and the previously stated facts, the efficacy of sewer water in destroying insects (Sprengel), and in applying the fertilizing matter to the land in a form certain to be instantly absorbed by the roots of plants, instead of being wasted, as solid manure is now, by sun, wind, drought, and tardy decomposition.

But again, it is admitted on all hands, that the value of the sewer water is such as amply to repay the expense of its conveyance.

'We can deliver a ton of water at eleven miles' distance, covering all our expenses, and leaving a handsome profit, for twopence a ton.' So says one of the highest authorities in Great Britain, on agricultural questions—James Smith of Deanston. Mr. Hawksley, the well-known engineer, offers to send water five

* The price of good guano has risen, since this was written, fully one-third.

miles, and raise it 200 feet, after paying all possible expenses and interest on capital, for 2½*d.* a ton; the expense of cartage to the same distance and height being about 4*s.*

Mr. Dean gives the expenses of distributing equal fertilizing values of solid and liquid manure, at three pounds for the solid, and six shillings for the liquid.

The practicability of this plan of conveying and distributing liquid manure by subterranean pipes, with cocks at intervals, from which a jet-pipe throws it over the land, is amply proved by the experiments of Mr. Harvey, near Glasgow, Mr. Thompson of Clitheroe, and the Metropolitan Sewage Manure Company, &c.

Surely, if these well authenticated facts are admitted, it is impossible to overrate their practical importance. They seem at first sight to make necessary some reconsideration of the relation between population and production. They suggest, at least, a reason for suspecting that political economists, when they laid down the law that population increases faster than production, may have been falling into the error of representing the tendencies of fallen man as the normal and ideal laws of the human species. Production ought to increase as fast as population, because any given population would return to the soil the whole elements of last year's food; and, in a food-importing country like Britain, faster than population, while, as at present, the yearly importation of food bears a higher proportion to the home produce, than the annual addition to population does to the census of the previous year.

With respect to agriculture, again, these facts put the consuming population in a new light. They now appear as the producers of the raw material of food, the very manure on the abundance of which all agricultural production and profit ultimately depends, and

for which the good farmer seeks by the most costly and laborious processes. If, as so many now assert, those processes, and cattle-fatting among the most important, are becoming unprofitable, the sewage of the towns offers a supply many times greater than what is now in use, namely, the whole of the crop which has been taken off the soil, besides the imported food, as raw material for the next crop, at a price far below that of the manure already used, and without those expenses and onerous details which are requiring, year by year, larger investments of farmers' capital, not only in the live stock themselves, but in housing and feeding them; surely, even at free-trade prices, the farmer could exist, if his non-necessary live-stock expenses were all but annihilated, and the whole materials of his last year's crop returned to him in the form of sewage at 12s. 9d. per acre's manure: while if, as Mr. Huxtable and others assert, the live stock can still be fatted at a profit, the whole sewage of the consuming population is to be taken as a clear gain, and lucro apponendum.

Now, we cannot resist the temptation of asking, en passant, why Professor Low has ignored the existence of this subject? The facts he cannot doubt. The authority of Smith of Deanston, a man who combined, as perfectly perhaps as any one in Britain, sound science and practical experience, is a definitive authority from which there is no appeal. The conclusions which we have taken the liberty of drawing from these facts are mere results of 'common sense.' Certainly, they involve Professor Low in a dilemma. Either science discovered the value of sewage manure, or the farmers did so for themselves. If the former be true, what becomes of Professor Low's assertion that science has discovered nothing profitable to the agriculturist? If the farmers discovered it for themselves, why have they

not employed it? As a fact, there is not one farm in a hundred, even within a few miles of a town, throughout Great Britain, which employs town sewage; not one farmer in a hundred who has shown the slightest desire to obtain that boundless productive wealth which is now running to waste from every sewer, or stagnating in wynds and alleys, breathing forth typhus, cholera, and consumption. Why is this? Why is a man of such standing and influence as Professor Low still engaged in the evil work of setting class against class, of informing the farmers that the influential members of the city populations are impostors, pedants, and dreamers, making every conceivable complaint against them, except the true one—that they are carelessly throwing away the farmer's raw material? If he wants to accuse London, Manchester, and Glasgow, let him accuse them of this;—let him say—'We farmers are ready enough to grow corn for you, if you will give us the corn to grow. By the laws of the soil, we cannot, after a certain point, which the best of us had already reached under protection, and which free-trade has accelerated for all, extract an increased produce from the soil without a disproportionate increase of expense. We must return to the soil what we take from it, or we and our soil must be exhausted. If we give to you the manufactured article, you must return to us the raw material to work up again.' If Professor Low wishes to help the agriculturist, let him address the commercial classes in that tone. He will find 'common sense' and justice enough in them to appreciate his argument, and to respond readily to it by the investment of capital in sewage works. If he wishes the farmers to combine, let him organize among them a combination to obtain their just and reasonable right, namely, the return of their crops in the

form of town manure. If he wants protection for them, let him agitate for the true protection; let him labour to obtain sanitary laws, which shall protect the farmer, not from the blessings of plenty, but from the curse of waste; from the barbarism which sends the materials of his wealth floating into every sea of these Islands; and in protecting the farmer, protect the poor of the cities from involuntary filth, and its accompaniments, pestilence, degradation, and drunkenness.

And why have not Professor Low and the protectionist farmers done this already? The subject is not one of yesterday. The pamphlet from which we have principally quoted was published three years ago. Much of the evidence in it is as old as 1840. It was in 1842 that the General Report on the Sanitary Condition of the Labouring Population stated fully and definitively the general facts of this question. Why, then, has so little been done by the farmers to gain their right? Why is the demand for sewage manure so small, that when a town is properly drained the river is found as of old, the best and cheapest receptacle for its 'refuse?'

'Because,' answer the farmers, 'it has not been as yet worth our while—we could make manure enough at home, with the addition of a little guano, to get on with.'

Exactly so, gentlemen. In plain English, you have been receiving so high a price for your corn, that you could cultivate at a profit without employing more than a very small proportion of the manure of the country: and therefore without evoking more than a very small proportion of the real productiveness of your soil. Protection has enabled you to look on complacently at this frightful waste of national wealth. Protection, in a word, has in this case, as in every other, been a pre-

mium on neglect of science, under-production, barbarism, and waste.

Now Free-trade, by compelling the farmer to depend on the maximum of production, will compel him to demand the cessation of this waste, which under protected prices was immaterial to him; just as it will also compel him to demand from his landlord tanks, and other means of saving the farm-yard drainings, the most valuable part of his manure, which on forty-nine farms out of fifty throughout England and Wales, is now suffered to escape into the nearest stream—not having been wanted under Protection prices.

The great advantages of draining, again, though confessed on all hands, have been as yet but partially felt in practice, just because science has not, till very lately, been brought to bear on the subject, and to discover its universal and certain laws; and also, because a large proportion of farmers, thanks to protected prices, have been able as yet to 'rub on' without drainage, even while they made no scruple of confessing the greatly increased produce to be obtained by it.

'But,' it will be answered, 'how can you ask the farmers at this crisis of depression, when they hardly know where to turn to meet present demands, to invest fresh capital in subsoiling and drainage?' The facts just stated with regard to sewage manure answer this question. Were once that article in general use, the immense saving to the agriculturist would give him fresh means of employing his capital in these now neglected channels, while they would become far more than before, necessary to his profit. It might not be a profitable speculation—in the case of naturally poor land it could not be—to double or treble the depth of available soil by draining and trenching, if the supply of manure to that soil was not proportionally increased.

This is one of the causes which produce the well-known law, that after a certain point, further expenditure per acre becomes unprofitable. Where the upper soil is exhausted by long bad farming, and the subsoil, being of the same original staple, remains unexhausted, there this law will manifest itself but slowly, if at all. But where, as in a large proportion of the soil of Britain, the subsoil is of an inferior quality, and requires to be 'made' even more than the upper soil—mere trenching and draining are often hardly profitable, except under very high prices. They are, in some very porous and 'hungry' soils, actually injurious, giving greater facility for the salts of the manure to escape beyond the reach of the roots. But where the whole increased depth of soil can be saturated (as it might be by sewage manure) with the food of plants, there the crop might fairly be expected to increase almost in the same ratio as the depth of soil: and the farmer who has a hundred acres tilled twelve inches deep, should be able to grow three times as much produce as the man whose hundred acres, a common case in England, are tilled only four inches deep. Ultimately, as every gardener knows, man can only take out of the earth what he puts into it. The supply of the elements of food naturally existing, or now remaining in most British soils, bears but a very small proportion to the produce; and the only one which sewage manure will not give, is the very one which draining and tillage will in every case eliminate in exact proportion to their increased depth, namely, the silicates required for the straw, which again, once produced, can be returned to the soil again without the slightest waste. 'Muck,' says the old Scotch proverb, 'is the mither o' the meal-kist;' without it the deep tillage of the garden would be all but unprofitable; by it the Belgians have made it worth their while to

trench their barren sands, and to convert them, as Mr. Rhaw describes, into 'a rich compost eighteen inches deep.' The eighteen inches would be of little gain, if they had remained eighteen inches of sand; and the soils of Great Britain will never be drained and tilled to the depth of which they are really capable with profit, unless some great movement, like that of the Sewage Manure Agitators, can throw into them a proportionately increased supply of the raw materials of food.

'But,' it may be said by a protectionist, 'this increased abundance will only be suicidal after all. It will only make wheat cheaper and cheaper, more and more unprofitable.' Then why should not other and more profitable crops than wheat be tried? It is by no means the ideal of a national agriculture that it should absolutely depend for its profit on the necessary food of the nation; nor does it in the best cultivated countries. The exclusive cultivation of wheat has all along been a temptation to the British farmer. It has led to protection, to corn-jobbing, to truck-payments, and a hundred other methods by which one class makes money out of the needs of all. Why should wheat be the crop on which the farmers' main profit depends? Lombardy has its silk, Germany its tobacco, Carolina its cotton, Belgium its flax—why not England also? Professor Low answers, in a passage as unfair (to use the mildest term) as any we have for some time met with, that certainly—

Speculative persons have been lately amusing themselves, and deceiving others, with calculations of enormous profits, not less, it is believed, than 20*l.* or 25*l.* the acre, to be got by producing flax; that laboured attempts have lately been made to show that lint can be grown in this country. Why, every old woman who can remember that every farmer used to grow his own lint, knows this; but every practical farmer likewise knows, that lint is not a crop so well suited as some others to maintain or increase the productiveness of a farm.

We beg leave to answer—That if Professor Low knows anything, as he must know, about the methods of cultivating flax, he must know also that Mr. Warnes of Trimmingham,* a 'practical farmer,' the great advocate of flax culture, under whose directions most of the experiments in that direction are now being made, promises no such enormous profits. As much as 25*l.* per acre, and even more, has been made, and is often made, in the North of Ireland: Mr. Warnes asserts his flax profits, on a Norfolk farm, to have averaged, for the last ten years, nine pounds an acre; and he not only proves the truth of this statement by full details of his expenses, in a pamphlet which we earnestly recommend to the notice of our readers, but offers his farm accounts for public inspection. It may be true, also, that every old woman knows that lint used to be grown, and that if farmers had found flax more profitable than wheat (i.e., protected wheat), they would have grown it long ago. But Professor Low must know that the reason why flax did not pay these gentlemen, and does pay Mr. Warnes, is, that they only secured the fibre, and did not allow the linseed to mature; or if they did, did not return it to the soil of their own farm, as Mr. Warnes does. Professor Low must be aware, also, that in these early attempts to grow flax under bounties on which he grounds his argument, the manure which Mr. Warnes has made carefully under cover so as to preserve its whole strength, used to be tossed out into the farm-yard to sun and rain, with not even a tank to catch the drainings; till the soluble salts and ammonia were all washed out, and it was reduced into that species of rotten thatch miscalled manure by three-fourths of the English farmers. If Professor

* Since deceased.

Low had brought an instance in which a scientific Scotch farmer, possessing good byres, and an ample yard-tank, had attempted to grow both flax and linseed, on Mr. Warnes' plan, and failed year after year, his sneers might have been worth something: as it is, they involve the same fallacy as his invectives against political economists. They are arguments against the civilization of the present, drawn from the barbarism of the past.

And it must not be supposed that the general cultivation of flax would, by diminishing the growth of wheat, increase the danger of that protectionist bugbear, our dependence on foreign countries. On the contrary, Mr. Warnes distinctly asserts, that since flax has been introduced into his rotation, he grows more, and not less wheat on his farm, although that crop recurs now once in five years only, instead of, as formerly, once in four. But Professor Low does not deny the productiveness of flax, or the richness of linseed; he only says that it is not as well suited to maintain or increase productiveness as some others. Which others? Certainly none of the usual grain, root, or green crops; for by adding flax to these, Mr. Warnes, it appears, has increased the productiveness of his farm, in the article of wheat. Such a result, by the bye, might have been prophesied à priori by one of those agricultural chemists whom Professor Low despises. For flax, like other oil-bearing plants, has an extraordinary power of absorbing nitrogen from the air, as well as from the soil, for the production of its linseed, while it takes up from the soil hardly any of those salts so necessary for the wheat plant. Thus Mr. Warnes' wheat crops will have been enriched, from year to year, by all the nitrogen which the flax has absorbed from the atmosphere, as well as by the increased amount of salts which

have been liberated from the soil by the deeper tilth required for the flax-roots.

'But,' says Professor Low, 'it must be pretty evident, that if a profit of 20*l.* or 25*l.* an acre could be made by raising flax in England' (which, as we have seen, nobody asserts), 'the Baltic farmers, who can raise it as well as we can, would not long leave us in possession of so profitable a monopoly. The Dutch will undertake to supply us with any quantity we choose to consume.' We answer—really under correction, for Professor Low may have better information on the point than ourselves—that, in the first place, it is a great question whether Baltic farmers can grow flax as well as we can. For it cannot be grown like wheat, by barbaric and careless tillage, made profitable by the innate powers of a virgin soil. It requires deep tilth, care, experience, and, above all, a large supply of nitrogenous manure, which the Baltic farmers do not possess, and cannot acquire without an enormous increase of their live stock at a proportionately enormous expense: while we have close at hand, in our sewage manure, an inexhaustible supply of the materials of flax and linseed, as well as of wheat. As for the Dutch, we question whether they can 'supply us with any quantity we want.' Neither they nor the Baltic farmers have, at least, yet contrived to supplant the Irish flax-grower in the linen mills of Belfast; why should they in Manchester or Glasgow? Their country is already so highly cultivated as to allow of no considerable increase of produce; the flax they now grow goes somewhere; if they withdraw it from its present market to throw it into ours, it will only leave an opening for our cotton, perhaps for our flax—unless, indeed, their former customers shall resolve to go naked

for the sake of Professor Low's reputation; and thus the matter becomes 'very nearly as broad as it is long.' Perhaps the true reason of Professor Low's contempt for flax culture is the very one which may possibly recommend it to some of our readers—that free-traders and political economists are approving of it; that Mr. Cobden has recommended a careful examination of the whole question as pregnant with important and beneficial consequences to home-manufacturers; that that gentleman's brother, as well as the Messrs. Marshall of Leeds, and other large capitalists, are briskly promoting both the growth and manufacture of flax.

We should gladly, did space allow, comment at length on the advantages which the labourer as well as the farmer derives from flax, as asserted by Mr. Warnes. In Trimmingham, during the last ten years, poor-rates have become almost nominal; want of employment for all sexes and ages almost unknown; the morals of the poor, and the condition of their dwellings and habits of life, have improved together, under the influence of a species of detailed and skilled labour, which Professor Low and his school of agriculturists have been in the habit of slighting, as 'unsuited to the economy of labour proper on a well-ordered farm.'

The same observations were applied also to the culture of silk. There is not the slightest doubt, from the experiments of the late Mrs. Whitby of Lymington, and of her disciples, that silk, commanding a higher price in the market than any foreign samples whatever, can be profitably grown along the southern coasts of England and Ireland, by employing, instead of the old white mulberry, the hardier and more prolific 'morus multicaulis' of Asia, which is now, we believe, super-

seding the white mulberry on the Continent. Even among the poor gravelly soils, and the severe spring frosts of the north of Hampshire, the experiment has succeeded. If not as profitable an investment to the tenant farmers as to some others, silk culture might at least form a large addition to the income of the peasant; and there is no reason whatever why the glens of Devon and of Kerry, now so often mere uncultivated nests of pauperism and savagery, should not be hereafter clothed with gardens of mulberry, affording both wealth and civilizing, because skilled, employment to the now wretched labourers.

Once more, it is by no means yet proved, that maize and lentils may not be cultivated safely and profitably in England. Mr. Keene's pamphlet, whose title stands among others at the head of this Article, announces a new sort of maize, which he asserts will ripen on the Pyrenees, in a climate at least as severe as that of England. Large quantities of it were actually ripened safely last year, and the only specimens of it which we have seen this year, show every sign of ultimate success. We earnestly hope that such may be the case, and that these inestimable grains may hereafter contribute a large proportion of the food of our peasantry in the south of England and in Ireland. One question, en passant, as a reductio ad absurdum of the whole theory of Protection, and we will dismiss the subject. If the southern counties of England should really take up the culture of maize, must not the less favoured northern counties be protected against them? Will Professor Low and his party, in that case, agitate for a cordon de douane along the line of the Great Western, and impose heavy duties on every sack of maize which shall dare to intrude its destructive cheapness to the

north of the Thames? If one country is to be protected against another by tariffs, one parish against another by laws of settlement, why not one county against another by octrois against maize, or any other production which shall introduce the ruinous elements of cheapness and abundance?

We have in the preceding pages attempted, more concisely than we should have wished, to point out some of the capabilities of British agriculture, and we look to North Britain, which has been always foremost in science and daring, still to lead the van towards these and far greater improvements. We are well aware that it may seem insulting to call upon men to exert themselves especially, in a moment like this, when they are especially crippled, but the pain of a remedy does not prove its inefficacy, nor is present distress the slightest argument against future prosperity. It is at the expulsion of a corrupt system, as during the cure of a disease, that the disorganization which it has produced is most palpable. It is when deprived of stimulants that the drunkard discovers his weakness, and has to endure many a miserable day before he can replace his artificial and temporary vigour by real and solid health. Even so will it fare with agriculture. Farmers may fail in abundance. Landlords may be ruined. But which of them? The men of capital, science, energy? No—The idler, the dolt; the man who is farming 100 acres of land on little more than a hundred pounds of capital; the landlord who has mortgaged his estate, and squandered his rents on harlots; they will fail and vanish, and labourer, land, and country will be well rid of them. But the men who are really fit to farm land—men such as are as common in North Britain as they are rare in the South, will rise after the

storm; the wiser, doubtless, by many a wholesome lesson, ready to adapt themselves to the circumstances of the future as manfully as they have to those of the past. The very fact of their having larger capitals than usual embarked in the land, while it may make them feel the first burst of the storm more severely than those who have less to lose, will at the same time give them greater power of recovering themselves. If they are really wronged; if any existing enactments can be shown to tax or hamper their occupation, they have a right to demand, and they will as surely obtain, the repeal of them; provided only that they do not by angry declamation, illogical arguments, provoking threats, and equally provoking appeals on behalf of labourers who do not require their sympathy, disgust and exasperate the mass of the British nation.

But if, in spite of the rebukes and exhortations of the vast majority of educated Britons, in spite of the increasing needs of the uneducated masses, the majority of the agriculturists shall still remain in their present mind;—if they shall still glory in rejecting the proved laws of political economy, and ridiculing the discoveries of science;—if they shall still refuse to help themselves, or to listen to any one who offers to help them;—if they shall still set up the interest of their class against that of the mass of the nation;—if they shall still glory in confessing their own impotence, and give us useless lamentations, instead of productive labours;—if they shall still pretend, by insincere and idle agitation and still more insincere and idle threats, to compass a protectionist reaction which they know to be impossible;—if they shall still refuse to meet like men, each by new endeavours on his own land, the exigencies of a new time, and prefer to remain—we quote in saddest earnest —'children sitting in the market-place,' refusing like

that perverse generation in old Judea, to sympathize either with the deeds and sorrows, or with the hopes and comforts of their fellow-men;—then they must not be surprised if the British nation shall take them at their word, and addressing them in a novel and more peremptory tone, say—

'Well, gentlemen; we have heard your complaints of inability to farm the land. We grant the truth of your statements, and when granted, what do they prove? Not that the land cannot be farmed henceforth, but merely that you cannot farm it, You assert that henceforth the tenant farmer cannot exist. Why should he? Is there any absolute and necessary law, human or divine, which makes it impossible to cultivate the land by any other agency than the single one of landlord, farmer, day-labourer? Doubtless you believe in the existence of such a law; for it is the habit of poor short-sighted humanity in every age to assume that the thing which is, always has been, and shall be for ever; and to erect the temporary accidents of its own narrow experience into divine and eternal necessities, without which the very sun would be blotted from the sky.—And behold a century passes, and the eleventh commandment of two generations back has given place to a fresh superstition, and is regarded as the solecism of barbarians. Are you aware, for instance, that it is only within the last century that any large proportion of the British soil has been cultivated by tenant farmers on the present system? Are you aware that only an exceedingly small proportion of the earth's surface has in any age or country been cultivated on that system? Learn that yeomen proprietors, metayers, cottier tenantries, and numberless other forms of agricultural class-economy, have existed, and do exist still; and that fresh methods of productive distribution, fresh classes of

agriculturists, may arise hereafter, and most probably will; the experience, invention, and economic knowledge of mankind being by no means yet exhausted, but rather in its infancy. No doubt the British system, which combines landlord, farmer, and labourer, is the best yet practised in an old and thickly peopled country; but it is not perfect. It has not tended to make the landlords as useful as possible; for it has encouraged them in idleness, neglect, and absenteeism. It has not tended to the maximum welfare of the labourer; for it has nowhere retarded, and in the Eastern and Southern Counties of England it has accelerated, his downward progress into slavery and brutality; it has made him, fearful paradox! a nomad and a glebæ adscriptus, a prisoner and a homeless man. It has put him, his house, his family, into the absolute power of your class, the class who are to this day doggedly resisting every attempt to educate, to civilize, or even give him the means of cleanliness and common decency. The only argument for the present system has been, that it hitherto was the best means of applying to the land the capital, energy, and skill of the middle classes without destroying the rights of property: and that last argument you have now cut from under your own feet. It is you, and not the free-trader, who assert that the middle class can no longer profitably apply either themselves or their money to the soil. It is you, and not the free-trader, who assert that the tenant-farmer system is in itself so intrinsically rotten and fallacious that, even in a densely peopled country like England, it cannot yield the fair profits of trade without the hot-house protection of monopoly prices and insufficient supply of the necessaries of life to the whole working class. We do not assert this. It is you, we repeat—you farmers yourselves, who are now trumpeting forth over all the kingdom the cessa-

tion of the last remaining argument for your existence as a class. But do not fancy that the soil of Great Britain will lie fallow because you are unable or unwilling to cultivate it. What we demand now is, the maximum of production from the British soil. If you can furnish that, you may and will remain. If not, neither we, nor the laws of political economy, which are older, stronger, than either you or we, will tolerate you. You must and will give place to those who can do that for which you assert your own incapacity. Who they will be, or how they will do it, we care comparatively little. We have faith in God, faith in the soil, His priceless gift; faith in science, which is His revelation; faith in the consequences of the just and righteous act of free-trade; and though you may deride us as unpractical enthusiasts, we will not shrink from believing where we do not see, and from expecting that the future of agriculture will be profitable to the consumer, profitable to the producer, profitable to the working masses, and that hereafter, as heretofore, the everlasting law will be fulfilled, 'He that tilleth his land shall be satisfied with bread: but he that followeth after vain persons shall have poverty enough.'"

But, indeed, the horoscope of the agricultural classes is by no means so difficult to cast. In the first place, if the poorer land shall, as Professor Low expects, 'go out of cultivation,' i.e. out of tenant-farmers' hands, their place may be at once supplied, with no diminution of rent, and a considerably increased produce, by peasant proprietors, or by what would perhaps be better in the present state of the agricultural classes, cottier tenants on long leases, binding them to methods of high cultivation. The prejudices of political economists against 'la petite culture' have been modified of late

by the facts in its favour proved by Mr. Laing's book on Norway, Mr. Blacker's and the Hon. J. Hewitt's success in Ireland, the late Mrs. Davies Gilbert's experiments in Sussex and elsewhere, and a mass of other evidence, which has so far convinced Mr. Mill, the best political economist of the day, as to cause him to give in his adhesion to the party who advocate 'la petite culture.' No doubt on this system a greater amount of produce is attained, combined with habits of thrift, self-restraint, and independence in the cultivators, to which our labouring classes are now, alas! rapidly becoming strangers: but it has its drawbacks, nevertheless; it is an isolating, and therefore a stationary, if not a barbarizing system of society; it affords but very small opportunities for employing the strength of combination, for investing large capitals in public works and widely spread improvements; it cannot be the ideal goal of a nation which, like Great Britain, has proved by experiment the enormous powers of union and co-operation. In peculiar localities, such as barren moorlands or rocky glens unfit for the plough, it may be profitably employed: but the majority of British soils must and will continue to be cultivated by 'la grande culture,' or some method which shall unite its advantages with that of garden farming. And there is no risk but that the large farm system will still be carried on, whether 'profitably' or not. If, as Professor Low sneeringly intimates, there will soon be plenty of opportunities for gentlemen amateurs to farm their own estates, all that can be said is, that it is 'a consummation devoutly to be wished.' Even if they lose money, as they very likely will, by attempting to imitate Mr. Huxtable, the land will be permanently improved, the produce increased, the labourers' wages, dwellings, civilization, bettered. Whether or not Mr. Fowler's magnificent

improvements on Dartmoor pay him or not, the thing is done—it is a κτῆμα ἐς ἀει—a present to his country of so much skill, labour, cultivation; and the mind must be sadly warped which can find, as some do, in such an action a reason for contempt. But farther, why may not the joint-stock company principle be applied to farms as well as to railroads? Why may not a board of directors, by means of their skilled servants, cultivate vast sheets of country with a skill, an energy, a largeness of design as yet unknown? 'What will Cockney directors know about farming?'. Why, what did they know about railroads? Are railroad directors engineers and surveyors? No, they are simply men of capital and men of business, who have the happy power, as yet unknown to most farmers, of recognising the men of really practical science, and setting them to work—as they did Stephenson and Brunel—as they will hereafter some of the very men whom Professor Low holds up to the ridicule of ignorant and conceited boors. A war, or some other cause, may check foreign investments; profits, according to their law of tendency towards a minimum, may and will temporarily sink so low as to make the chance of profit by land-investments worth consideration; and we may see, perhaps, in the course of a very few years, large joint-stock capitals poured out upon the half-tilled lands of Britain, to the immense improvement both of culture and cultivators. Doubtless, there will be hasty speculations, failures, losses; but the money will be there—so much surplus capital locked up—surely in a better place than if it were with the last surplusses, in repudiated loans and trainless railroads.

But even thus the ideal object of scientific agriculture, the maximum of production, would not be as certainly reached as by 'la petite culture' of Belgium

and Lombardy. Why, then, may not the experiment be made to combine the two, by means of associate labour, in which every individual employed on a farm, from the mere paid worker to the capitalist, should receive his proportion of the profits, the muscle of the labourer and the skill of the scientific man being credited to them, as they easily may be, as so much capital?

Mr. John Stuart Mill, in his chapters on the probable futurity of the labouring classes, which we would gladly notice more at length did space allow, points to some such arrangement as the certain goal of modern industrial society.* It is at least a question deserving careful consideration, whether the benefits of a plan which has been found already successful in the Cornish mines and fisheries, and in various handicrafts both in London and Paris, may not also be extended to agriculture. Why should not, hereafter, a whole parish, for example, be cultivated by one large associate corporation, in which all the civilizing appliances of the model lodging-houses might be combined, without the least intrusion on family independence, with the economy of a common kitchen, washhouses, stores, school and library—why not a common place of worship also? The government of such a corporation, even if

* The value of this 'organization of industry' (he remarks, in summing up his important discussions on this subject), 'for healing the widening and embittering feud between the class of labourers and the class of capitalists, must, I think, impress itself by degrees on all who habitually reflect on the condition and tendencies of modern society. . . . Although, therefore, arrangements of this sort are now in their infancy, their multiplication and growth, when once they enter into the general domain of popular discussion, are among the things which may most confidently be expected.'

Miss Martineau, also, in a letter to the 'Leader' newspaper, advocates experiments of the kind to which we refer, and which are so important in the adjustment of the labour question.

every member possessed votes in proportion to his capital, would always remain in the hands of the most wealthy and skilful; while the very poorest would acquire self-respect, independence, self-restraint, chivalrous and self-sacrificing diligence, under the ennobling consciousness of corporate life and permanent interest, and under the wholesome pressure of the public opinion of the community. The division of labour might be carried out to an extent as yet unknown in agriculture, and yet combined with a civilizing variety of occupation. The sales and purchases of the establishment might be conducted by a single salesman, who could visit markets now inaccessible to most farmers, with an enormous saving of that time, trouble, and horse expenses which are now wasted in market journeys by isolated farmers. At the same time, it is by no means necessary that the whole population of such an establishment should be devoted to agriculture. On the contrary, the maximum of sewage-manure being the condition of fertility, it would be advantageous to admit a proportion of artisans, who might send their goods up to the metropolis, as the watch-makers of Penzance do now, and while sharing in the blessings of country life, be themselves a benefit to the soil. If the materials of manufacture, such as tobacco, silk, or flax, were grown on the farm, the amount of capital combined would allow of machinery being erected to work them up. The machinery need never be idle; whether steam or water-power, there would be always employment for it in grinding corn, in scutching flax, or in pumping sewage-manure; and thus the enormous water-power of our moors might be made the very agent of their cultivation, manufacture and agriculture might be combined in the same community, and the civilization of Manchester spread the energy which it

possesses, and receive the health it wants, amid the wasted solitudes of the Yorkshire hills.

This is but an ideal; imperfect, distant, perhaps impossible; yet the increasing number of authoritative names which sanction such experiments, affords at least a fair ground of hope to any wise and benevolent capitalists who may be inclined cautiously to attempt, step by step, the realization of these or analogous agricultural reforms.

And if this be not the ideal future agriculture of the world, still an ideal there is, to be revealed and realized in God's good time. Man stands upon the earth to replenish and subdue it; to conquer the brute phenomena of nature by obedience to her laws; and the same God who has given him that mission, has promised him, in a hundred passages of holy writ, that he shall be enabled to fulfil it.

THE WATER SUPPLY OF LONDON.*

THE law of Laissez-faire, held by some of the earlier political economists to be absolute and inviolable, is gradually receiving its due limitations, without losing its ground as a law founded on the right, or rather on the duty, of every man, to be self-energizing and self-developed. 'Laissez-faire,' in its extreme meaning of 'no human government whatsoever,' is in fact the ideal state of mankind, the realization in society of Augustin's 'Ama, et fac quicquid vis;' and in proportion as men are men, and their humanity on all points whatever is developed and perfected, they may be safely left to the suggestions of their own hearts and reason.

But 'Ama, et fac quicquid vis,' is by no means identical with 'Ama teipsum, et fac quicquid vis;' and a state of society in which self-interest is the ruling

* The North British Review, No. XXIX.—1. 'The Principles of Political Economy.' By J. S. Mill. Second Edition. London, 1850.—2. 'Memorial to Lord John Russell and Sir George Grey from the Metropolitan Sanitary Association.' London, 1851.—3. 'General Report of the Sanitary State of the Labourers of Great Britain.' London, 1842.—4. 'Report of the General Board of Health on the Supply of Water to the Metropolis. App. I. Returns to the Queries Addressed to the Water Companies. II. Engineering Reports and Evidence. III. Medical, Chemical, and Geological Evidence.' London, 1850.—5. 'Report of Do. on the Epidemic Cholera of 1848-9. Appendix (B) to Do.' Report by Mr. Grainger. London, 1850.—6. 'A Microscopic Examination of the Water Supplied to the Inhabitants of London. With Coloured Plates.' By Dr. Arthur Hassall. London, 1850.

motive of action, is not to be treated as one in which a one divine inspiration, a one reason, a one purpose, rule all alike. And how far we are from this latter ideal state, how near to that former bestial one, we all know but too well. We are in an abnormal, in what Scripture—in words which will after all prove to be the most terse, deep, and scientific—calls a 'fallen' state; we have deflected from our ideal; we have been untrue in every age and clime to the laws and constitution of our species. Overlooking this fact, the earlier political economists were too apt to look at the present accidents of human society as if they were its constitutional and ideal phenomena. They often mistook the tendencies of fallen man for eternal laws, and commanded that he should be left to live an ideal life of free self-government, while he was, de facto, a slave to his own lusts and passions, and a tyrant to those weaker than himself; and among the vulgar, there have been always selfish, lazy, or lawless hearts, ready to raise in response a cuckoo-cry of 'Leave us to ourselves—it is the law of the universe:' ignoring the fact, that to leave them to themselves, means to leave those weaker than them to be their prey.

The truth is, that in proportion as any man, or nation, or class, are fallen; in proportion as they are beasts, savages, or children; thus unconditionally to apply laissez-faire to them is as gross cruelty, in the form of justice, as it would be to leave a kennel of mad dogs to bite each other; a tribe of savages to be decimated by small-pox, because there was no demand for vaccination among them; a child to run naked in the woods to shift for itself, and, if not poisoned by wild berries or eaten by wolves, develop its individuality freely into a 'Peter the wild boy.'

At 'the other pole of the antinomy,' as the Germans

would say, stand the advocates of paternal government. These, too, have a truth upon their side: but these, like those advocates of laissez-faire already referred to, have turned their truth into a falsehood and a tyranny, simply by urging it unreservedly. It is true that all government should be paternal: but then the word paternal must be defined—and defined in accordance with the duties of a father. It should, doubtless, help and guide all those who are unable to help and guide themselves. It should coerce those who are blind to the interests of their neighbours and the commonweal. In short, if any class be beasts, they must have tamers; if savages, they must have tutors; if children, they must have parents. But for what purpose? To keep them what they are? Surely not; but to raise them to that which they are not—to make the beasts men; the savages civilized; the children adult and self-dependent sons—in short, to restore them to that very ideal from whence they have fallen. 'Paternal governments,' so called, have ignored this; they have ignored the fact of there being a possible ideal of man—a redemption ready for fallen man, a kingdom of God on earth—and therefore it happens, significantly enough, that those governments which have been the most doggedly quasi-paternal, have been either utterly godless, or else Romish—that is, belonging to the religion which denies individual responsibility, the right to individual development, and a really human, not a merely ascetic and saintly, ideal of man. The most complete paternal government of our own times, that of Austria, has an explicit combination of both these elements—a mixture of sheer Atheism and sheer superstition, both in governors and governed.

The office of all government, paternal or other, is, as the Bible sets forth, self-sacrifice, and not selfish

advantage; and the perfect method of fulfilling that self-sacrifice, is gradually to render its own office unnecessary; to teach its subjects, not merely to obey it, but to do without it; to be, in short, truly paternal, by educating its children into sons, who may go forth and labour freely for themselves, and on their own responsibility, according to the laws which have been taught them, and with that sense of a common brotherhood, a common family interest, which they have acquired under their father's teaching.

The advocates of either method, then, properly limited and explained, seem to have a truth on their side. There is surely some one mesothetic truth, deeper and wider than either, which underlies and explains both, and to act on which is to act on both at once without violating either. The discovery—or resuscitation—of such a truth seems to be the chief problem of social government; and to be especially needed, and therefore perhaps especially easy to discover, in this present age.

But, in the meantime, there are practical canons enough already laid down to guide us safely in our mode of dealing with particular cases. One such is given in the following passage from the second volume of Mr. John Stuart Mill's 'Political Economy' (page 521):—

§ 7. We have observed, that, as a general rule, the business of life is better performed when those who have an immediate interest in it are left to take their own course, uncontrolled either by the mandate of the law or the meddling of any public functionary. The persons, or some of the persons, who do the work, are likely to be better judges than the Government of the means of attaining the particular end at which they aim. Were we to suppose, what is not very probable, that the Government has possessed itself of the best knowledge which had been acquired up to a given time by the persons most skilled in the occupation, even then the individual agent has so much stronger and more direct an interest in the result, that the means are far more likely to be improved and perfected if left

to his uncontrolled choice. But if the workman is generally the best selector of means, can it be affirmed, with the same universality, that the consumer, or person served, is the most competent judge of the end? Is the buyer always qualified to judge of the commodity? If not, the presumption in favour of the competition of the market does not apply to the case; and if the commodity be one in the quality of which society has much at stake, the balance of advantages may be in favour of some mode or degree of intervention, by the authorized representatives of the collective interest of the State.

§ 8. Now, the proposition that the consumer is a competent judge of the commodity, can be admitted only with numerous abatements and exceptions. He is generally the best judge (though even this is not true universally) of the material objects produced for his use. These are destined to supply some physical want, or gratify some taste or inclination, respecting which wants or inclinations there is no appeal from the person who feels them; or they are the means and appliances of some occupation for the use of the persons engaged in it, who may be presumed to be judges of the things required in their own habitual employment. But there are other things of the worth of which the demand of the market is by no means a test; things of which the utility does not consist in ministering to inclinations, nor in serving the daily uses of life, and the want of which is least felt where the need is greatest. This is peculiarly true of those things which are chiefly used as tending to raise the character of human beings. The uncultivated cannot be competent judges of cultivation. Those who most need to be made wiser and better usually desire it least, and if they desired it, would be incapable of finding the way to it by their own lights. It will continually happen, on the voluntary system, that the end not being desired, the means will not be provided at all, or that the persons requiring improvement having an imperfect or altogether erroneous conception of what they want, the supply called forth by the demand of the market will be anything but what is really required.

Now these observations, like those which precede them, apply directly to the Water Supply of large towns. Here the end proposed is pure and wholesome water. That the consumer is not the best judge of this, is sufficiently proved by the facts—that people are often content for years to drink, under the name of water, fluids which physicians know well, and indeed often warn them in vain, to be mere diluted poison,—that the substances which make water unwholesome are generally impalpable except to microscopic examination or chemical tests,—that the diseases produced or

aggravated by them, such as calculous disorders, dyspepsia, cholera, &c., are not suspected by the mass of water consumers to have the slightest connexion with the liquid which they drink,—and that, therefore, to use Mr. Mill's words, the presumption in favour of the competition of the market does not apply without limitation to water supplies.

Moreover, to continue our comment on the paragraph which we have just quoted, cleanliness may surely be classed among those things 'the want of which is least felt where the need is greatest.' If the uncultivated are no competent judges of cultivation, surely the dirty are equally incompetent judges of cleanliness. If Mr. Mill's remarks refer, as he well says, to those things which have a peculiar tendency to 'raise the character of human beings,' surely cleanliness, which stands in first rank among such things, is within its scope. It is surely, as the old proverb says, next to godliness; without it education is half powerless, for self-respect is all but impossible. We do not speak of the stains contracted by honest labour, which the butcher or the nightman washes off after his daily work, and returns at once to decency and comfort: but of the habitual ingrained personal dirt, where washing is either impossible or not cared for; the dirt which extends itself from the body to the clothes, the house, the language, the thoughts; the dirt of thousands and ten thousands in our great cities, who literally never dream of washing, simply because it has been to them from childhood a luxury as impossible as turtle or champagne. Among these the demand for water, like that for education, is exactly in inverse proportion to the need. Are these creatures, at once animals, savages, and children, to be left for pure water

to the laws of market demand? They do not even require it for drinking. Gin and beer are their beverages. We shall see hereafter what strong excuses they have for resorting to these even when water is at hand; much more, then, when for washing their rags it has to be begged or stolen, and that only three times a-week. But there is surely another case in which the law of laissez-faire admits of modification, namely, when the commodity is one which is necessary to the consumer, but of very small profit to the producer. There are things which would be incalculable blessings, we may boldly say, which are absolute necessaries, to the poor, with which private speculators have but a very small interest in providing them, on account of the small price which they are able to give in return; and water is one of these. Too many town landlords are well aware what very little direct interest they have in seeing that the wretched houses from which they draw their rents are properly watered and sewered. Their tenants are careless about cleanliness. They do not refuse to take a house because it is unprovided with the commonest decencies of life. Or again, they must live near their work, and take any hovel which they can find. Or again, the increasing demand for houses treads so close upon the heels of the increasing supply, that the landlord can obtain an exorbitant rent, let the state of the house be what it will, and let it again the very day the house is unoccupied. All these influences are more or less at work in the crowded districts of our great cities, and are especially strong in vast tracts of the metropolis; and wheresoever this is the case, any attention to water or sewage on the part of the landlord is a mere alms, a waste of capital in a commercial point of view. It is true, his tenants are decimated

by rickets and consumption, fever and cholera: but he lives in a very different quarter. His own house is comparatively well watered and sewered.

> Let the galled jade wince,
> His withers are unwrung.

And, in the meantime, his tenants are too ignorant, too careless, above all too poor, to make the necessary improvements for themselves; and being, at most, tenants by the quarter or the half-year, they cannot be expected to invest their earnings and create a demand for permanent improvements in houses which they may leave in a few months. This is, we assert, the normal state of all the poorer districts of London, of too many provincial towns, and of the greater part of the agricultural districts. Is it one which is to be left to right itself? It has been given up hitherto to laissez-faire and individual self-interest; and as for the fruits of it, if our own eyes and noses will not demonstrate them to us in a walk through any of the poorer streets in London, one single statistical fact should be enough to carry conviction to the most obstinate supporter of no-government. When the cholera of 1832-3 ravaged London, one person out of every 255 died. That this epidemic was, if not entirely caused, yet infinitely aggravated, by the defective quality and quantity of the London water and sewage, which latter item very much depends upon the quantity of the water supply, was notoriously and indisputably proved by medical and scientific evidence of every kind. We need only instance the invaluable 'Report on the Sanitary Condition of the Labouring Population,' by Mr. Chadwick. That Report was published in 1842. The cholera returned in 1849. Had the sanitary condition of London improved one whit in the interval? So far from it, the deaths from the same cause in the second attack

amounted to ONE in every ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTY-ONE, or four-sevenths more than in the first one. This fact we think needs no comment.

While such a patent practical refutation stares us in the face, we cannot help wondering at the assertions of a certain portion of the press, that Government had much better leave the Londoners alone; that they know their own interests, and can manage their own water supplies perfectly for themselves.

No doubt they can; but can they manage the water supply of the poor? If they can, why have they not managed it? They may understand their own interests; but do they understand the interests of the poor? And will they prefer their own interest, or that of the poor, when the two happen to clash, as they do in this case? If they do, why are things as they are? Surely, if the existing water companies, the parochial and district boards of the metropolis, and the general demand of the London public, be so competent to induce a proper water supply for the future, that competence ought to be shown by the proper state of the water supply at present. Similar causes should produce similar effects. We can judge of what the metropolis will do for itself, only by what it has done. Let us see what it has done, on the method of private speculation by quasi-competing, but really monopolist companies.

Nine years ago, Mr. J. Liddle, one of the medical officers of the Whitechapel Union, stated that, in his district—

> There was not, in the poorer districts, such a thing as a house with the water laid on, or furnished with a sink for getting rid of the waste; that they had only a very scanty supply from stand pipes, kept in tubs in the rooms in which they lived (and therefore saturated with the gaseous and organic matters given off in the breath, ... perhaps with worse); . . . . that their washing consisted of

merely passing very dirty linen through very dirty water (the hardness of the water preventing the soap from lathering properly), causing a smell most offensive and injurious to their health; that the filth of their dwellings was excessive, and that of their persons likewise.

We omit the sickening accounts of the utter want of sewage, as foreign to our present subject; though it must never be forgotten, that, without a plentiful and constant supply of water, the most scientific and complete sewage system is a nullity. Now, every clergyman and medical man is aware, that this is no exceptional case; that there were, nine years ago, thousands of houses all over London in the same state as these Whitechapel ones, and worse: and that all public authorities, water companies, and landlords, must have been aware of their existence; for Mr. Liddle's evidence, with much more to the same purpose, appeared in the Report of 1842, to which we have just alluded,—a work which, attacking, as it did, vested interests innumerable, was sure not to have escaped the notice of the parties interested,—to have opened their eyes, if not their hearts, to the deadly consequences of their neglect,—and to have aroused them, if anything would, to examine into the state of the poorer districts which they professed to supply, and remedy evils patent to every sense—of those not interested in insensibility. They cannot, therefore, for the last nine years at least, plead ignorance of their own lâches. Let us see, now, what improvement they have effected during that period.

LETTER FROM JOHN LIDDLE, ESQ.

4, Alie-place, Jan. 5, 1850.

DEAR SIR,—There are several courts in the Whitechapel Union which are without a supply of water. In all there is a deficient supply. The poor inhabitants are for the most part supplied with water from a stand-tap, the water from which flows daily for a short time (from one hour to three hours). Some of the houses where the poor reside are three stories high; and as the water only flows for a

limited time in the court, the lodgers in the attics of these high houses must either go without water entirely, or obtain a limited supply with a great deal of labour and loss of time.

In Johnson's charge, where more cases of illness have occurred than in any other locality in Whitechapel, the only supply of water for the inhabitants is a pump, the water from which is said to be unfit to drink, and the poor people are obliged to obtain their supply from a neighbouring court, and they have great difficulty in procuring it, the inhabitants objecting to let them have any.

In Cartwright-street, the inhabitants are supplied from a well, the water from which is pumped into a tank, and pipes are connected with it, from which the butts in the houses in the neighbourhood are supplied. But the machinery is sometimes out of repair, and the inhabitants have then to obtain water elsewhere. In some instances the water-butt is adjacent to the privy.

In Hebrew-place and Love-court, Middlesex-street, the tenants of one of the landlords are without any supply of water except that which they may obtain from a pump. Here these poor people say that the water from the pump is so bad that they cannot use it, and they are obliged to beg it from their neighbours. In this case the landlord had a dispute with the Water Company, in consequence of their giving him notice to raise the water-rate during the rebuilding of some of the houses; alleging, as the reason, that the quantity of water which was required for the mortar of the houses was much more than was needful for the occupants. The landlord resisted their demand, and the water was cut off.

In the month of August last, a complaint was made by a party residing in the eastern extremity of Whitechapel, to the trustees, of the bad state of the water which was delivered into their premises. A sample of the water was shown to the trustees; it was most foul and fœtid. A committee of the trustees was appointed to make inquiries into the case, and found it as described. The Water Company was written to, and new pipes were laid down. Whether the Company made any deduction from their annual charge, I do not know.

The water which is delivered into my own house is unfit to drink, unless previously filtered. It is usually turbid. All complaints are of course useless. The only reply would be to a complaint, 'If you don't like it, we will cut it off.'

Very truly yours,
JOHN LIDDLE.

P.S.—The trustees recently passed a resolution complaining of the bad quality, deficient quantity, and extravagant charge for watering the parish.

ALEX. BAIN, ESQ.,
Assistant-Secretary, General Board of Health.

Poor Mr. Liddle! And this is his latest news!

Surely 'wisdom crieth in the streets, and no man regardeth her.'

And let no one suppose this to be an exceptional case. We distinctly deny it to be such. We assert that there is hardly a group of houses of the poorer class in London, in which the supply of water is not scanty in quantity, deficient in quality, and supplied by a method which defiles and wastes it as much as possible, while the sewage, till the late Government improvements were commenced, was bestially inefficient.

'In the city of London,' says that energetic apostle of baths and washhouses, Mr. Bowie, 'the water is in general very scanty, and sometimes altogether wanting; often thick, muddy, putrid, unfit for use.' He enumerates, 'among a host of others,' thirteen courts and alleys where the inhabitants state that 'there was no water laid on.' 'They got it where they could, by begging, borrowing, and from the neighbouring pumps.' 'They have been without water for eight years, and often more in need of it than victuals.' 'Water dipped with pails, and very dirty;' . . 'often looks quite yellow;' . . . 'only fit to rinse a pail or cleanse the privy;' . . . 'tastes as if putrified, and often contains worms an inch long.' 'A gulley-hole in connexion with the pump.' 'There is also,' say Mr. Bowie and many other witnesses, 'an evil of considerable magnitude likely to arise from the practice of having public pumps, or stand-cocks. It is that, as women and children have to go and wait their turn, they may come in contact with persons of the very worst character, hear very bad language, and at last become regardless of decency.' And this, be it never forgotten, is the state of things in the only part of London which has a local government.

The same disgusting evidence is given by Dr. Hector

Gavin as to a considerable part of Shoreditch, one-half of Hackney, and nearly the whole of Bethnal Green, in themselves rather great towns than districts. Perhaps, too, some of our readers may have heard of Jacob's Island, Bermondsey, where—until private persons totally unconnected with the locality interfered—a respectable population of dock-workers had literally no other water to drink than that of the same stagnant open sewer into which the whole filth of their houses was thrown.

All these instances, with the exception of Jacob's Island, are north of the Thames: but when we add to these the still worse state of the poorer dwellings on the south bank, throughout the vast and crowded tracts of Lambeth, Bermondsey, Rotherhithe, Southwark, and Newington (the chief seats of cholera), the whole presents a picture more like some foul and fantastic nightmare than an account of the metropolis of the greatest nation in Europe.

And at what cost, does the reader fancy, could a supply of excellent water be provided for every house, at high pressure (thus diminishing by one-half the dangers to life and property by fire)? For less than threepence a-week per house.

The blame of all this must be divided between the house-owners, the Water Companies, and the Local Boards. Of the inefficiency of these latter in the whole matter, the state of things gives full practical proof. Not that they are composed of worse men than other local boards, but that the constitution of London is different from that of any other large city in these islands. In almost every other city or town there is one central and corporate authority, composed of men of all ranks, and containing a good proportion of bankers, manufacturers, merchants, and other men of a class above ignorance, hasty and reckless greed, and private job-

bery. In any water-scheme, these men will have the most important, if not the sole voice. If the corporation are the suppliers of water, the central authority has full play, and Government interference, except in the form of inspection, as in the case of railroads, is unnecessary. Even if the town be supplied by one or more water companies, the corporation will be able, as in the case of Nottingham, to make their own terms with them, with a due regard to the public benefit, not only as a matter of benevolence, but also of poor-rates. In most cases the most wealthy, best educated, and public-spirited members of the corporation will be among the capitalists of the water-scheme; and thus, as in the case of most Scotch and north-country towns, the general consolidation of different interests will work well and wholesomely, especially if the area of the town be small enough for a single scheme to be projected and carried out by one or two public-spirited men, who command the respect and attention of their fellow-townsmen. Yet even in these cases, we find complaints of competition between different companies, and longings for more complete union and centralization. Mr. Hawksley, the celebrated engineer, in his evidence on the New Nottingham Water Supply, which has become famous from its extraordinary success in all but annihilating the causes of cholera between 1833 and 1849, speaks strongly against the disadvantages, even there, of want of united management. It is needless to quote further evidence on this point; a summary of the whole question seems to us to be contained in the following opinion of Professor Clark, of Aberdeen, the justice of which, we think, will be at once evident to all our readers.

Living in a town (Aberdeen) with a population of nearly 70,000 inhabitants, where the water is supplied, not by a joint-stock company, but by the Commissioners of Police, who are elected by the

rate-payers, it has often occurred to me to question the policy of allowing water to be supplied to a town by a joint-stock company, in any case whatsoever. The extensive pipes laid throughout all the streets, and branching to all the houses, cannot conveniently, nor without a great sacrifice of expense, be laid in a second set, much less a third; therefore competition, such as occurs in the supply of bread and meat, or of like articles of demand, is out of the question in regard to the supply of water on a large scale. The establishing of a joint-stock company for the supply of a town with water, is the establishing a monopoly of trading persons, having the power, without responsibility, of taxing the inhabitants for their own benefit. The practical check on any crying excess in their charge, and on their heedlessness about supplying water of a proper quality, lies mainly in the apprehension of a second company being established; but since no new works can be undertaken without an Act of Parliament, and without risk of competition with the old company, such as almost always proves ruinous to both; and since, in order to establish the new company, an agitation in the community has to take place, the check is not of a desirable kind; neither is it effectual in the generality of cases.

Now, Dr. Clark, it will be seen, goes even further than we do; for we have pointed out cases in which a joint-stock company might exist harmlessly, by being all but identified with the corporation itself. But it must be remembered, that in the metropolis this possibility does not exist. There is there absolutely no central or corporate authority. With the exception of the city itself, with 'its very badly constituted, and very badly administered local government,' (to quote Mr. J. S. Mill's words,) it is in reality a mere congeries of huge overgrown parishes, each a large town in itself, but in general with no authorities but parochial ones, and the innumerable, confused and complicated boards of surveyors, trustees, &c. &c., which have grown up, they hardly know how themselves, according to special exigencies. Hence no unity in road-making, no unity in sewerage, no unity in water-supply. All London drives through a great street in one parish, yet that parish alone often has to pay for the whole wear and tear. Or perhaps parish A will not go to the expense of improving the upper end of Blank Street,

because parish B persist in leaving the lower end of it a slough. Parish A cannot, or rather, till the happy revolution of sewerage governments, two years ago, could not, drain itself, because parish B, lying lower, refused to lower its sewers. Or parish A and B, having each their own private interests, and, alas for poor human nature! their own private pets, and relations, and jobs, ran each of them their own huge useless sewer to the river, along a high and therefore comparatively useless level; when, if they had combined, they might have run one along a lower level, saving half the expense, and doing the work effectually. And as for water-supply, parish A, B, and all the rest of the letters feel it most honestly a matter beyond them—so vast and important, that like all vast and important things, the only power capable of coping with it is—blind chance.

Moreover, the local governments of London are especially in the hands of the shopkeepers and the owners of small tenements. The proportion of manufacturers and large capitalists, except in the city, is by no means great. The noblemen who own London land have generally let it pass out of their own control on long building leases, and confined their real care to their county estates. Few or no gentlemen have a strong interest in London parochial government; and thus the vast majority of London parishes, perhaps the whole of those which require water and sewerage, are in the hands of shopkeepers, middlemen, and persons bound up with them by various ties, often more potent than disinterested. Thus in any sanitary case, the same body of men are too often both criminal and judge, and the well known abomination of a bench of game-preserving squires sitting in judgment on a poacher is enacted 'en grand' at every vestry, by some hundreds of shopkeepers, with this slight difference, that the lives of

human beings, and not of hares, are in question. Doubtless, the London middle-classes have many good qualities—all classes have, for that matter—but that they are not the people among whom one would look especially for either chivalrous self-sacrifice or scientific enlightenment, let their conduct in the matter of the Smithfield nuisance witness. That something or other steels them to evils patent to every medical man, the present state of London proves; and even the best of them, in the hurry of business and the unceasing struggle of competition, now becoming daily more and more demoralized by puffery and adulteration, are too apt to thrust out of their sight and mind any investments of capital but those which promise the most immediate returns. The whole modern habits of the middle-classes in great cities tend to make them live from hand to mouth; to forget foresight for present gain; to be yearly more and more swayed by individual or trade-interests, less and less alive to corporate ones, least of all to the interests of those classes below them, whose welfare, however surely, yet still only indirectly and invisibly affects their own. And these evils are daily increasing. While we write, puffery spreads, adulteration, as in the case of substituting chicory for coffee, openly triumphs, and insults men like Mr. Baring, who attempt to prevent it; slop-selling thrives, and master sweaters become public officials and law-giveis to the metropolis . . . . Conceive entrusting the water and sewerage of their workmen's dwellings to the tender mercies of Nebuchadnezzar & Co.!

There appear to us to be only two methods of making anything like organized or harmonious sanitary reform in the metropolis possible. One is, to incorporate all parishes either north or south of the Thames, within the bills of mortality, into that to which they really

belong, the City of London; and to make their constitution as democratic as possible, giving, if it can be done, a vote in vestry not merely to householders, but to every lodger, male or female, above the age of twenty-one; in order that the poor creatures who now suffer most from public neglect, may have some voice at least in its removal.

But this, if not altogether Utopian, is certainly a difficult and far distant change; and, in the meantime, there appears to be but one alternative, the interference of government authority. Whatever just and time-honoured jealousy of such interference there may be in the minds of many, ought to be outbalanced by the recollection that the British dislike of government interference arose from exactly the opposite cause from that which is now pleaded against it. Government interference was repulsed in old times, in order that the free efforts of the many might not be overridden by the few, by a clique, or by a despot; to repulse it in this case, is to leave the many—the whole, in fact—of the working-classes of the metropolis at the mercy of the few, for the supply of a vital necessary. The many and the few have changed places. Her Majesty's Government, if it brought forward a bill for supplying London with water, and compelling its extension to every dwelling, would surely be representing the feelings and interests of the great mass of Londoners far better than either the local boards or the water companies as yet have done.

With some such views as these, we conceive, a society, calling themselves 'The Metropolitan Sanitary Association,' have memorialized the Government in a temperate and weighty address, to which they append a letter from Mr. John Stuart Mill, in answer to queries of theirs on the subject. In Mr. Mill's eyes, the

question of Government interference with the Water Supply 'is a question of general policy, rather than of political economy;' a wholesome rebuke, whether intentional or not, to that party which make a few economic canons, discovered by wiser men than themselves, the absolute measures of all things in earth, and in heaven also, when they trouble themselves with that distant and unimportant locality.

The whole letter is, as was to be expected, full of broad and weighty truths. Mr. Mill acknowledges the impossibility of any real competition in water supply; the necessity of monopoly, and therefore, when that monopoly is exercised by private individuals, of slavery; the defective administration of joint-stock company directors (on which point he has already spoken in his Political Economy); the preference to be given to municipal authority; the non-existence of any such authority in London; the probability of the Government being best able to originate, if not to carry out, a scheme of this kind; and, after giving due weight to the proper jealousy of Government coercion and meddling, which he justly praises as a sentiment to which this country owes the chief points of superiority which its Government possesses over those of the Continent, he concludes by proposing that, when a properly constituted local body shall exist in London, the water supply shall, under proper securities, be delivered up to its charge; and that, in the meantime, the work will be most fittingly entrusted to a Commissioner appointed by the Government, and responsible to Parliament, like the Commissioners of Poor-Laws.

It is in vain to quote the late great improvement in the North British water supplies, and thence to argue for the non-necessity of Government interference. That such an improvement has taken place without compul-

sion, is an honour to Scotland and the rest of the North, but it is no test of the power of laissez-faire in other parts of Great Britain. London is not Glasgow, nor Reading Paisley, nor Oxford Aberdeen—nor any twelve towns in the South of England at all analogous to the twelve in the North which Mr. Stirratt, bleacher, of Paisley, honourably mentions; nor (it is a Southron who pens these words) is the slow and short-sighted Southron the canny, shifty, far-seeing Scot, with that mingled daring and caution of his which enables him to take the newest hint of science, without involving himself in the building of card castles and the riding of hobbies. In looking through these Government Reports, a Scot may well feel proud of the testimony they bear to the civilization, and public spirit, and scientific excellence of his countrymen. But all Scotch savans must not expect to get the same hearing for their wisdom on the south side of the Humber which they do on the north. In their case the saying, that 'a prophet has no honour in his own country' is strangely reversed. Playfair and Smith of Deanston are listened to in the Lothians; Clark and Angus Smith in Aberdeen and Glasgow. But South-Saxon soil still remains half-tilled, and South-Saxon towns unsewered and unwatered. The same fault to which old chroniclers attribute the ruinous weakness of England before the Norman Conquest still besets all her doings; the isolating, individualizing selfishness, which makes every man 'run to his own house,' and leaves the commonweal to shift for itself; the stubborn slowness, which is as dogged in the support of prescriptive wrongs as it is in that of prescriptive rights—these make the Londoner shut his ears to facts, and submit to evils which make his whole existence one of the strangest jumbles of artificial civilization and primeval barbarism which the world has ever beheld.

What, for instance, is the quality of water which the London Water Companies, in the face of scientific warnings and public remonstrances, now find it consistent with their interest and the full market demand to supply?

In the first place, without exception, their supplies swarm with living animalcules, the presence of which, putting aside its disgustingness, as a mere matter of feeling, must be considered as indicative of unwholesomeness. These creatures are nature's scavengers—their food is decomposing organic matter, animal and vegetable; they attend on putrefaction, as surely as the vultures on the fallen carcass. In this light they may be considered as warnings against disease rather than causes of it; but many of them are capable of living and multiplying within the human body—many more of producing irritation in the intestinal canal, by the silicious shells and spines, finer than the points of the finest needle, which envelop them; many minute fungi, also, can propagate disease in a healthy organic tissue which has been inoculated with them. If any reader wish to instil into his imagination a wholesome terror and disgust of these wondrous atomies, we must refer him to the works and the evidence of Dr. Arthur Hassall, who has devoted many years to the investigation of this branch of microscopic science. Now, with these creatures the whole of the water companies' supply teems; and not only with living animal and vegetable productions, but, worse still, with dead and decaying organic matter. The worst in this respect are those which supply the Surrey side of the metropolis, where, accordingly, the ravages of cholera have been principally felt. Several of these actually distribute to their wretched customers unfiltered Thames water—in a word, their own diluted sewage, swarming with the same

animalcules which haunt the sewer mouths; and, in addition to these, Dr. Hassall has actually detected on various occasions, matters connected with sewage, such as black carbonaceous matter, portions of the husk and down-hairs of wheal, cells of potato, granules of starch, fragments of muscular fibre, tinged with bile.—We presume that the water supply of ancient Jerusalem must have been somewhat different to that of modern London. We do not require the horrors of a blockade to bring on us the threat of Rabshakeh to 'the men who sit on the wall.'

The water of the companies north of the Thames gives a less disgusting 'fauna,' the water being by several companies filtered more or less—though we should say, less rather than more, to judge by the list of 'Actinophrydes, Desmidiæ, Diatomaceæ, Entomostracæ, Annelida,' and other filth-bred monsters, which, with occasional Thames Paramecia from the sewer mouths, make up the list of their fertility. In one case, the water which professed to be brought from pure country regions, is adulterated, if not with Thames water, still with water from the Lea, and furnishing, as Dr. Hassall says, a mixture of ditch, spring, river, and well water, swarming with organic life. Another, while it professes to derive all its water from a canal above the influence of the tide, has a communication with the sea within the influence of the tide and Blackwall Creek; and the other supplies are drawn, either from the Thames or from ponds and rivers which are exposed to all the evil influences of stagnation, farmyard ditches, abundant vegetation, and a public which disregards old Hesiod's warning about the sacredness of springs; and their supplies exhibit accordingly the animals and vegetables bred under such circumstances.

Such—for the whole evidence is too disgusting for

us to enter into details—is the result of several hundred examinations of water, obtained from the service pipes of the different companies, and therefore in the state in which it is consumed by the public. And when it is remembered, that on the present cistern system, every house-cistern in the great majority of houses is an alembic for further putrefaction, further multiplication of these wriggling monsters, for the absorption of lead from the cistern itself, of sulphuretted hydrogen from the neighbouring closets, even if none is already present (as is often the case in the South London water) from the Thames itself; that wherever this water is procured from stand-pipes, it has to remain in the dwelling rooms of the consumers, to give out its air, and absorb the vapours of their breath—we will neither finish our sentence, nor make any comment thereon.

It appears, moreover, that this water, even when filtered, is of a high degree of hardness, ranging by Dr. Clarke's soap-test, from 12 to 16½ degrees, and thereby entailing on the inhabitants a heavy tax, by the increased consumption of soap and tea, &c. &c., required by hard water, probably of more than double on the whole soap, and one-half on the whole tea, consumed. When we add to this, that in order to abridge this undue use of soap, soda is largely used by all London washerwomen, to the speedy destruction, as all housewives know, of the fabric washed; that from the experiments of M. Soyer, the hardness of the water interferes with all culinary processes; that, as is well known to every groom, it is highly injurious to horses, and, indeed, is naturally refused by all cattle which can obtain soft; without mentioning the chapped skin, and fruitless scrubbing, which attend every attempt to wash in unboiled water in most parts of London; when we sum up all this, we have such a count

against the present system as certainly justifies Dr. Sutherland's dry and cautious remark, that it is 'something like a positive injustice to give the poor no alternative between want and cleanliness, and the labour and expense involved in washing with water of from 12 to 16 degrees of hardness, when a softer supply might be attainable.'

There seems to be great reason to suspect, also, that the use of hard water increases dyspeptic complaints, and makes epidemics more severe and more fatal. Such certainly seems to be the conclusion from the following fact.

Since the epidemic in 1832, the population in Glasgow south of the Clyde may be considered to have remained in the same state, with the exception of the introduction of the soft-water supply. In one district, the parish of Gorbals, the attack of 1832 was fearful, while, in the attack of 1849, it furnished comparatively a small number of cases, the epidemic in the other parts of Glasgow being, as in the former cholera attack, very severe. The unanimous opinion of the medical society was, that this comparative immunity was owing to the soft-water supply.

Similar evidence is given from Paisley: but whether we attribute this particular improvement to the quantity, or, with the local medical men, to the quality of the new supply, there cannot be a doubt that the substitution of soft for hard water has a tendency to extirminate another class of diseases, one of the most frightful and agonizing which can beset humanity. In Paisley, it appears, calculous disorders, formerly very numerous, have during the last ten years all but utterly disappeared, except in parts not accessible to the soft-water supply, or in cases from the chalk counties of England —i.e., from the strata which now supply hard water to London, and from which almost all the proposed plans wish still to supply it.

One more count remains of our general indictment against the present private monopolies of London water,

and that a most important one. It is the extraordinary fact, that 'under existing management the first and chief necessity to be provided for by water companies is waste of the supply, while the domestic consumption has occupied in reality only a secondary position.'

The actual proportion of waste to domestic consumption, even under a system of constant supply by standpipes, seems, from the general carelessness with which matters are managed, to be very difficult to ascertain; in many parts of London it is at least as three to one. No fact can speak more strongly to the utter wrongness of the whole system, its inefficiency and its expensiveness; its inefficiency, in that the greater part of the supply is lost in the process of distribution, and the consumers have, of course, to pay for what they do not use; and its expensiveness, in that a far larger amount of capital is invested in the business than is actually required, not merely to supply the present quantity to the consumers, but to supply a quantity equal to their real needs. It seems at first sight most puzzling to understand how such enormous waste can be consistent with any remunerative profits. But so it is; for the companies exist, and stoutly desire and struggle to continue in existence, leaving us to suppose that their profits must be, if not exorbitant, still far larger than, under a proper economic system, they need be; and these companies are now crying out for 'full compensation' for their waste as well as their supply.

But, on the whole, we do not complain of these companies. They have but followed the maxims which all English society follows in these days—to get as much for their money as the public will allow them. The Grand Junction Company, the state of whose water supply is far superior to the rest, hardly forms an exception; for there being, as they themselves state,

few or no groups of poor houses in their district, their customers, being of the better class, have, of course, kept up a demand for a better article; while those which supply the masses have been able freely to distribute an inferior article, at a price as high as they dared; and if men do not dare somewhat, when in possession of a monopoly, they must be more than men.

After all, these companies have but gone the way of the world. Beginning with a selfish competition, they have ended in monopoly. Even as two large trouts rush out, each from his separate nook, first to clear the pool of small fry, and then to settle competitively the exact extent of their respective beats, till after many battles, consuming strength and time in fighting instead of feeding, the stronger establishes himself at the head, and the weaker at the tail of the pool, and there is peace, and monopoly for each over all wretched smaller creatures—even so have they. Nine long years was one London company engaged in competition against three others, and secured its ground at last: at, of course, a waste of capital and labour—a 'disastrous struggle,' as they themselves call it—so painful to their memory 'that they feel it unnecessary to enter on it.' . . . Poor things! But they, and fairly enough too, intimate that they were not the only offenders. 'The blame of what was wrong must at least be shared by the Legislature, which had sanctioned and encouraged the competition.' 'The public, too, must also share the blame; the instances were numerous during the competition, where the company was requested by memorial to drive mains in some particular locality, the memorialists agreeing to take a supply on certain terms. This agreement was commonly forgotten when the mains

were laid, and the rival companies were left to bid against each other for tenants to the point of ruin.'

Of course they were. The selfishness of the memorialists led them to tar on the rival selfishnesses of the water companies; and then the same selfishness led them to desert the poor exhausted combatants, when they became by fighting too exhausted to do their work well and cheaply. Oh purblind John Bull! who will go on doing evil, and making others do it, that good may come; and cannot see that unrestrained selfish competition, when completely triumphant, may appear in the shape of your old bugbear, monopoly! In your selfish short-sighted cunning, you thought you could get your water a little cheaper by trusting it to the self-interest of a few capitalists, and letting them beat each other down: and, behold, you are literally filled with the fruit of your own devices; with rats and mice and such small deer; paramecia, and entomostraca, and kicking things with horrid names, which you see in microscopes at the Polytechnic, and rush home and call for brandy—without the water; with stone, and gravel, and dyspepsia, and fragments of your own muscular tissue tinged with your own bile. And all because you have not, and are afraid to have, an authority which will compel you to go to the expense of threepence a week on each of your houses. . . . . Oh John! John! The love of money is the root of all evil! And even as it is now with your water-supply, so may it be soon with your clothes-supply, when you have petted and egged on a few large slop-sellers to eat up all the small ones, and then to combine in triumphant monopoly, to clothe you with devils' dust instead of cloth, and starch instead of linen. . . . Oh John! John!

Leaving now this water-company question, as one worth no more argumentation, we go on to notice the

various schemes for a better supply of water to London which are now on foot.

One source which has been proposed is from Artesian wells, sunk through the London and Plastic Clays to the sand strata beneath, which furnish a soft water, considered by one or two gentlemen, on account of the quantity of carbonate of soda which it contains, to possess the quality of economizing soap (not, we fear, of economizing the fabrics washed in the said soap), and of enabling us to obtain in all cases (Soyer's experiments only assert in some few) a better extract from all matters exposed to its action, either hot or cold; and to be 'the beau idéal of what a water ought to be for the supply of a city or town.'

Now, granting that thirteen grains of sulphate of potash per gallon will not make the water nasty; that eight grains of Glauber's salts will not make it purgative; that twenty grains of common salt will quench and not increase thirst; and that the eighteen grains of carbonate of soda is nothing but beneficent to the shirts and towels which will have to endure it; letting pass the small quantities of carbonate of magnesia, and phosphates, and crenic, and apocrenic, and silicic acids; granting that a North Briton fresh from the 'amber torrents' of Scotland would not pronounce the Trafalgar-square water, the analysis of which we have just sketched, to be 'an unco fine liquid for purposes o' agricultural irrigation:' but in point of drinking excellence, as like the beau idéal of water as the dumb-waiters and soda-water bottles from which it issues are like the beau idéal of sculpture—granting all this, and as much more as is required, there is one fatal objection against these Artesian wells—that the supply from them, even with the small demand as yet made on them, has been steadily decreasing for the last twenty years and more;

that every fresh well draws away the water from the surrounding ones, and necessitates the deepening of them; and that this fact is not merely owing to the opening the springs at a lower level, for, to quote Mr. Braithwaite's evidence, 'there has been one universal depression in all the wells to the sand spring, varying only in degree according to the depth.' This fact, we apprehend, needs no comment.

The same phenomenon gives rise to a fatal objection against all propositions for supplying London from deep wells sunk into the vast water-loaded fissures which undoubtedly exist in the chalk. Even now, the great brewers who are supplied by chalk wells are compelled to pump on separate days, to avoid exhausting the supply; and the springs at Watford, twenty miles from London, are higher every Monday than during the rest of the week, owing to the pumping being discontinued on Sunday. Besides, these waters are of a degree of hardness, varying on an average up to nineteen degrees, which renders them utterly unfit either for washing or drinking.

The most obvious sources of supply are of course the Thames and its tributaries, and many projects have been started for diverting to London a stream which would certainly be inexhaustible, from some higher and therefore purer point on the Thames. Of these the most simple, feasible, and economic, seems certainly to be Mr. Hawksley's scheme for establishing reservoirs and filters on the Thames bank a little below Maidenhead, and thence conveying the water to Hampstead, from which point it would be distributed at high pressure over the whole of London; or that of Mr. Quick, an eminent engineer, who proposes that the supply should be taken from Twickenham,* about ten

* A South London Company has, since this was written, obtained a large supply of Thames water from this point.

miles nearer the heart of London in a direct line, considering that there would be no advantage corresponding to the increased outlay obtained by taking it from a point higher up the river. The estimated cost of Mr. Hawksley's project is 746,790*l.*, of Mr. Quick's, 300,000*l.* But the objection against both these, and all other similar ones, is the same as against the last-mentioned. The water is too hard, varying from twelve to sixteen degrees, according to Dr. Clark's soap-test; and even granting that a perfect method of filtration could eliminate all the organic, as well as the mechanical impurities, neither of which are inconsiderable, and that the water could, by aeration during filtration, be redeemed from its present flat and nauseous taste, still there would be on an average twelve grains of carbonate, and two of sulphate of lime to be got rid of.

It has been recently proposed to do this by applying the admirable process invented by Professor Clark of Aberdeen, which is destined, doubtless, hereafter, to come into extensive use. Professor Clark, in 1841, took out a patent for this invention, which consists in a very simple application of lime-water to water already containing bicarbonate of lime, compelling it thereby to deposit the lime which it holds in solution. The whole of this learned gentleman's evidence as to the evil effects of hard water, and the complete and instantaneous improvement effected by his process, is exceedingly valuable, but all that we have space to notice is the treatment of his discovery by the various London water companies. In the delusive hope that they were as enlightened as himself, he sends round to them copies of his pamphlet, inviting them to inspect his process. Two of them return no answer; another cannot try it themselves, but recommend him to go round to their large customers, and see if they would

make the trial—and of course take the expense. Another promises polite attention—and so vanishes back into its native dirt. Another company informs him that, having reached perfection, the sending his pamphlet to them was quite needless. Another inspects the process, two years ago, and is not heard of again. Another expresses their opinion that the process could be worked much more economically—(to them?)—by consumers. And the worst of all, with its Thames paramecia and infusoria, and nineteen degrees of hardness, informed the astonished philosopher that their water had been 'bright, pure, and salubrious for the last two years!'

But, in the meantime, a method of water supply has been gradually extending itself throughout Scotland and the North of England, which bids fair to out-vie all others, from the peculiar simplicity of the process, which is, in fact, a mere organized copy of nature's own process of producing springs and rivulets, and from the great purity of the water which is obtained by it. It consists in collecting, over certain elevated gathering grounds, the whole rain-fall of the district, whether from natural springs or from the artificial drainage of the soil, and conduoting them down to reservoirs of a sufficient height to supply water at constant high pressure. The water thus obtained, off the granite, greenstone, trap, and millstone-grit rocks of the north, varies from one and a half to five degrees of hardness, and, as many of our North British readers must be well aware, is as perfect in quality as can be desired. By this method the majority of cities and large towns of Scotland, and many in Lancashire, are enjoying those advantages of soft and well aerated water to which we have had already occasion to allude; for the pure rain of heaven, from which ultimately the greater part of all supplies must be derived, is thus intercepted in its passage

downwards, and turned to use, before it has had time to become adulterated with any of the numberless elements, organic and inorganic, which it must meet with in its passage downwards to the sea, or into the bowels of the earth.

The superiority of this method of supply has been, as it seems to us, so clearly demonstrated by the evidence laid before the Health of Towns' Commission, that it is not to be wondered at if those interested in the fate of the London supply cast about for some plan of applying it to the case before them.

The first point was to ascertain whether the neighbourhood of London offered a gathering-ground for pure water of a sufficient size; and such a one presented itself at once in the range of sterile moors known to geologists by the name of the Bagshot Sands. The upper portions of this district spread out in vast flats, clothed with a scanty brown heather, and fast increasing forests of Scotch fir, utterly uncultivable from their barrenness. These hills were within the last fifty years the haunts of red-deer; and the black cock still lingers on the sunny brows, the snipe and wild duck around the desolate pools; while the valleys which intersect the waste form a striking contrast to the dreary solitude above, by their noble timber trees, their crops of scanty, but peculiarly excellent wheat which clothe the slopes, and their boggy meadows, which furnish a coarse herbage for summer cattle. Travellers by the Southampton Railway must often have been surprised at finding themselves, within an hour's run of the greatest metropolis in the world, whirling through miles of desert; and even though they may have acquiesced in the popular notion that it is impossible to cultivate these wastes, they may yet have been inclined to suspect that so peculiar a district, in so pecu-

liar a situation, may have still its use, and its part to play in the forward movements of civilization, perhaps in relation to the very city on which it borders so nearly. We profess our honest belief that the Bagshot Sands, like everything else in the world, were not created in vain; that rabbits and plovers' eggs, unsaleable fir-poles, and the worst of turf, were not intended to be their final produce; and that even those upper gravel layers, which are absolutely beyond the hope of cultivation, at least till science has progressed for centuries more, possess, by virtue of their very barrenness and utter flintiness, a wealth of their own, in the form of a pure, well aerated, and naturally filtered water, which no science can imitate or improve.

It appears, on the whole, that the existing springs of this district are sufficient to afford a daily supply of 40,000,000 of gallons, sufficient to give to 520,000 houses (double the number now in London) 75 gallons per house. The estimated expense of intercepting these waters at their sources, storing them in a reservoir on Wimbledon Common, and connecting them with the present street pipeage, together with compensation to mill-owners, &c., is 646,000*l.*, which, if paid off in 21 years, at 6 per cent., would amount, at the average of 280,000 houses, to little more than three shillings a house; while the present rate to the water companies on the same number of houses is about 1*l.* 12*s.*

We may be perhaps allowed to enter somewhat into detail in our description of these proposed gathering grounds, likely now to become a subject of public interest and notoriety.

No district, perhaps, of South Britain, shows more distinctly the connexion between the outer clothing and the inner substance of mother earth, the strict coincidence between geologic fact, and the features of

landscape. The upper flats are composed principally of a pure brown sand, with a cap of diluvial gravel, the relics of primeval chalk, greensand, and wealden hills, from which, by some mysterious agency, every atom of carbonate of lime has disappeared, leaving nothing behind but their skeleton of sharp flint and sand. The imagination reels at the thought of the stupendous masses of chalk which must have been destroyed, to furnish from their scantiest ingredient, miles on miles of gravel hills.—However, the destruction has taken place; and there the gravel beds lie, a natural filter, along the steep base of which innumerable crystal springs well out in a clearly defined horizontal line, and flow down over the more retentive loams and foliated clays of the middle Bagshot beds, which form the cultivated slopes of the valleys. Much of the rain which falls on the table lands, unable to escape at this level, descends to a greater depth, to reappear in the lower meadows in the form of chalybeate springs, the presence of which, colouring all the rivers of the district, has engendered fears in various quarters of the general purity of the water. But as a fact, the springs of the upper level, from whence alone the supply need be drawn, are as free from iron as they are from every other contaminating element, organic or inorganic. In the course of ages, whatever hydrated oxide of iron has been diffused in a soluble state through the upper strata, has been washed down by the rains to the retentive beds below, and carried out by them into the valleys, to form an alluvium abounding with every conceivable salt of iron. To a similar process of filtration, Mr. Prestwich, the geologist most intimately acquainted with the district, refers the entire absence of all carbonate of lime in the form of fossil shells throughout the upper sands; the hydrated protoxide of iron, in its

progress downwards, having rendered whatever carbonate of lime it met soluble in water. Should this theory be correct, as we have no reason to doubt, it would seem that nature has not only provided the Londoners with a ready-made filter, but has been kindly busy for ages preparing it for them. Moreover, these Bagshot Sands have advantages which few even of the Scotch gathering grounds possess. There is no real peat on their surface, but only a few inches of black peaty soil, nine-tenths of it sharp sand; they require no drainage, the present volume of the springs being enough to supply a city far more populous than London is now; the mere act of clearing them out would considerably increase their volume; and the soil above them being uncultivated, there is no risk of contamination from the filtering downwards of manures.

The alternative lies evidently between this scheme and that of Mr. Hawksley or Mr. Quick. The Government will, we hope, be shortly called on to decide whether of the two can be carried out at least cost. The Bagshot plan promises at present to be dearer than the Twickenham and cheaper than the Maidenhead one; but it must be remembered, that to the estimated expense of these latter must be added the yet uncertain cost of Dr. Clark's softening process; and we must consider the labour of the manufacture, the risk of mistakes in applying it to so vast an amount of water daily, and the fact that it will not bring the Thames water down to within one and a half or two degrees of the natural average of Bagshot and Farnham water. No conclusion to which the Government can come can affect the engineering reputations of Mr. Hawksley and Mr. Quick, or throw discredit on Dr. Clark's invaluable discovery. There are towns and villages by the hundred to which his process of purification will be an invaluable boon. The time

may come when landlords and corporations shall be compelled, in default of a natural supply of soft water, to produce an artificial one by this or analogous means. The time may come, too, when the ædile, with powers to inspect and compel the improvement of the houses, water, and sewerage—and perhaps the agricultural drainage—of every district, shall be as integral a member of English as he was of Roman civilization. But, in the meantime, it is evident that a bold step must be taken in the direction which we have been pointing out; and it is to be hoped that Her Majesty's Government will not be deterred by any cuckoo-cry of the press, still less by any jealousy of the energy and talents of its servants, from taking into its own hands the work which a selfish, divided, and careless public disdains to perform for itself—or rather, for its poorer members.* These are days in which everything, even freedom and 'our glorious constitution' themselves, must submit to be tried by the one test of practice. 'Will it work?' asks the world of every man and matter: 'If not—it must go:' And surely that free government incurs a heavy responsibility, which brings a slur by any tardiness of its own on those principles of liberty which are committed to its charge. We know that despotisms have been able to supply the masses fully and freely with necessaries, like water, unattainable by their own efforts. If freedom is to hold its place in the respect of the masses, it must show an equal, if not a superior power for the common good. The inhabitants of ancient Jerusalem were plentifully supplied with water, both from reservoirs and pipes. Those of Rome had a gratuitous supply several times as great, in proportion to the population, as that

* All Government schemes have as yet fallen through; and the metropolis is still left to the tender mercies of the water-companies.

which is considered necessary for London. The Peruvian Incas constructed aqueducts of 120 and 150 leagues in length. In Spain, both the Moors and Romans have left traces of their power in the form of enormous aqueducts and reservoirs to supply cities insignificant in comparison to London. The canals of Semiramis, and those of Egypt, are world-famous. Assyria and Mesopotamia are intersected by the ruins of vast water-courses; and through great part of the East, even at this day, the inhabitants are supplied with fresh and pure water by the beneficent will of their despots. Surely a free country ought to be able to do more, not less. It remains for England to show that her boasted civilization and liberty has a practical power of self-development, which can meet and satisfy the wants of an increasing population, and cleanse from her fair face such plague-spots as we have been—not describing, for too many of them are past description, but—hinting at, as delicately as the nature of the subject will allow. Unless some practical proof is given to the suffering masses who inhabit our courts and alleys—one single savage and heathen tribe of them, the costermongers, numbering, according to Mr. Mayhew, thirty thousand souls—that a constitutional government can secure more palpable benefits to the many than a tyranny; unless anarchy ceases to be considered identical with freedom, and human beings to be sacrificed to a proposition in a yet infant and tentative science;—we must expect to see, in the course of events, a revulsion in favour of despotism, such as seized France when she raised Napoleon to the Empire; a revulsion which is more possible even in Britain, to judge by certain ugly signs on both extremes of the political horizon, than the pedants of 'constitutionalism' are inclined to suppose.

And though these permitted evils should not avenge

themselves by any political retribution, yet avenge themselves, if unredressed, they surely will. They affect masses too large, interests too serious, not to make themselves bitterly felt some day or other. 'This is no question,' as Mr. Mill well says, 'of political economy, but of general policy:' we should go farther and say—of common right and justice. Therefore it is that we make no apology for any foul details through which we have led our readers. We only wish that we could show them the realities amid which thousands of their fellow-subjects are born and die. It is right that 'one half of the world should know how the other half live.' Neither do we apologize for having made use of severe expressions of condemnation. Such questions as these, involving not merely profits, but health, sobriety, decency, life, are to be judged of not by the code or in the language of the market, but of the Bible. Acts concerning them are not merely expedient or inexpedient, fortunate or unfortunate, but right or wrong: the wrong may be excused by ignorance; but a wrong, and therefore a self-avenging act, it remains till amended. Even the hard and soft water controversy is not a mere matter of soap and tea expenditure, but of humanity and morality. As Hood said of the slop-sellers, so we say of the hard-water-and-animalcule-sellers,—

> It's not trousers and shirts you're wearing out;
> It's human creatures' lives.

We may choose to look at the masses in the gross, as subjects for statistics—and of course, where possible, for profits. There is One above who knows every thirst, and ache, and sorrow, and temptation of each slattern, and gin-drinker, and street-boy. The day will come when he will require an account of these neglects of ours—not in the gross.

NORTH DEVON.*

A PROSE IDYL.

I.—Exmoor.

WE were riding up from Lynmouth, on a pair of ragged ponies, Claude Mellott and I, along the gorge of Watersmeet. And as we went we talked of many things; and especially of some sporting book which we had found at the Lyndale Hotel the night before; and which we had not by any means admired. 'I do not object,' said I, 'to sporting books in general, least of all to one on Exmoor. No place in England is more worthy of one. There is no place whose beauties and peculiarities are more likely to be thrown into strong relief by being looked at with a sportsman's eye. It is so with all forests and moor-lands. The spirit of Robin Hood and Johnny of Breadislee is theirs. They are remnants of the home of man's fierce youth, still consecrated to the genius of animal excitement and savage freedom; after all, not the least noble qualities of human nature. Besides, there is no better method of giving a living picture of a whole county than by taking some one feature of it as a guide, and bringing all other observations into harmony with that original key. Even in merely scientific books this is very possible. Look, for in-

* Fraser's Magazine, July, 1849.

stance, at Hugh Miller's 'Old Red Sandstone,' 'The Voyage of the Beagle,' and Professor Forbes's work (we had almost said epic poem) on 'Glaciers.' Even an agricultural writer, if he have a real insight in him—if he have anything of that 'secret of the più nel' uno, —'the power of discovering the infinite in the finite;' of seeing, like a poet, trivial phenomena in their true relation to the whole of the great universe into which they are so cunningly fitted; if he has learned to look at all things and men, down to the meanest, as living lessons written with the finger of God; if, in short, he has any true dramatic power, then he may impart to that apparently muddiest of sciences a poetic or a humorous tone, and give the lie to Mephistopheles when he dissuades Faust from farming as an occupation too mean and filthy for a man of genius. The poetry of agriculture remains as yet, no doubt, unwritten, and the comedy of it also; though its farce-tragedy is being now, alas! very extensively enacted in practice—unconsciously to the players. As for the old 'pastoral' school, it only flourished before agriculture really existed; that is, before sound science, hard labour, and economy, were necessary, and has been for the last two hundred years simply a lie. Nevertheless, as signs of what may be done even now by a genial man with so stubborn a subject as 'turnips, barley, clover, wheat,' it is worth while to look at old Arthur Young's books, both travels and treatises; and also at certain very spirited 'Chronicles of a Clay Farm,' by Talpa, which teem with humour and wisdom.

'In sporting literature (a tenth muse, exclusively indigenous to England), the same observation holds good tenfold. Some of our most perfect topographical sketches have been the work of sportsmen. Old Izaac

Walton, and his friend Cotton, of Dovedale, whose names will last as long as their rivers, have been followed by a long train of worthy pupils. White's 'History of Selborne;' Sir Humphry Davy's 'Salmonia;' 'The Wild Sports of the West;' Mr. St. John's charming little works on Highland Shooting; and, above all, Christopher North's 'Recreations'—delightful book! to be read and re-read, the tenth time even as the first—an inexhaustible fairy well, springing out of the granite rock of the sturdy Scotch heart, through the tender green turf of a genial boyish old age.—No, Claude; sporting books, when they are not filled (as they need never be) with low slang, and ugly sketches of ugly characters, who hang on to the skirts of the sporting world, as they would to the skirts of any other world, in default of the sporting one, form an integral and significant, and, in my eyes, an honourable and useful part, of the English literature of this day; and, therefore, all shallowness, vulgarity, stupidity, or book-making in that class, must be as severely attacked as in novels and poems. We English owe too much to our field sports to allow people to talk nonsense about them.'—He smiled.

'You talk often of the poetry of sport. I can see nothing in it but animal excitement, and a certain quantity, I suppose, of that animal cunning which the Red Indian possesses in common with the wolf and the cat, and any other beast of prey. As a fact, the majority of sportsmen are of the most unpoetical type of manhood.'

'More unpoetical than the average man of business, or man of law, Claude? Or even than the average preacher? I believe, on the contrary, that for most of them it is sport which at once keeps alive and satisfies

what you would call their æsthetic faculties, and so—smile if you will—helps to make them purer, simpler, more genial men.'

'Little enough of the said æsthetic appears either in their conversation or their writing.'

'Esau is a dumb soul, especially here in England; but he has as deep a heart in him as Jacob, nevertheless, and as tender. Do you fancy that the gentleman over whose book we were grumbling last night, attached no more to his own simple words than you do? His account of a stag's run looks bald enough to you: but to him (unless Diana struck him blind for intruding on her privacy) what a whole poem of memories there must be in those few words,—'Turned down * * Water for a mile, and crossed the forest to Watersmeet, where he was run into after a gallant race.'

'A whole poem?'

'Why not? How can there be less, if he had eyes to see?'

'Does he fancy that it is an account of a run to tell us that 'Found at * * * * cover, held away at a slapping pace for * * * * Barn, then turned down the * * * water for a mile, and crossed the Forest; made for * * * Hill, but being headed, went by * * * * woods to D * * * where he was run into after a gallant race of * * * * hours and * * * * miles?' It is nearly as dull as a history book!'

'Nay, I never rode with those staghounds: and yet I can fill up his outline for him, wherever the stag was roused. Do you think that he never marked how the panting cavalcade rose and fell on the huge mile-long waves of that vast heather sea; how one long brown hill after another sunk down, greyer and greyer, behind them, and one long grey hill after another swelled up browner and browner

before them; and how the sandstone rattled and flew beneath their feet, as the great horses, like Homer's of old, 'devoured up the plain;' and how they struggled down the hill-side, through bushes and rocks, and broad, slipping, rattling sheets of screes, and saw beneath them stag and pack galloping down the shallow glittering river-bed, throwing up the shingle, striking out the water in long glistening sheets; and how they too swept after them, down the flat valley, rounding crag and headland, which opened one after another in interminable vista, along the narrow strip of sand and rushes, speckled with stunted, moss-bearded, heather-bedded hawthorns, between the great grim lifeless mountain walls. Did he feel no pleasant creeping of the flesh that day at the sound of his own horse-hoofs, as they swept through the long ling with a sound as soft as the brushing of a woman's tresses, and then ring down on the spungy, black, reverbating soil, chipping the honey-laden fragrant heather blossoms, and tossing them out in a rosy shower? Or, if that were too slight a thing for the observation of an average sportsman, surely he must recollect the dying away of the hounds' voices, as the woodland passes engulfed them, whether it were Brendon or at Badgerworthy, or any other place; how they brushed through the narrow forest paths, where the ashes were already golden, and the oaks still kept their sombre green, and the red leaves and berries of the mountain-ash showed bright beneath the dark forest aisles; and how all of a sudden the wild outcry before them seemed to stop and concentrate, thrown back, louder and louder as they rode, off the same echoing crag; till at a sudden turn of the road there stood the stag beneath them in the stream, his back against the black rock with its green cushions of

dripping velvet, knee deep in the clear amber water, the hounds around him, some struggling and swimming in the deep pool, some rolling and tossing and splashing in a mad, half-terrified ring, as he reared into the air on his great haunches, with the sparkling beads running off his red mane, and dropping on his knees, plunged his antlers down among them, with blows which would have each brought certain death with it if the yielding water had not broken the shock. Do you think that he does not remember the death? The huge carcass dragged out of the stream, followed by dripping, panting dogs; the blowing of the mort, and the last wild halloo, when the horn-note and the voices rang through the autumn woods, and rolled up the smooth flat mountain sides; and Brendon answered Countisbury, and Countisbury sent it on to Lynmouth hills, till it swept out of the gorge and died away upon the Severn sea? And then, does he not remember the pause, and the revulsion, and the feeling of sadness and littleness, almost of shame, as he looked up for the first time—one can pardon his not having done so before—and saw where he was, and the stupendous beauty of the hill-sides, with the lazy autumn clouds crawling about their tops, and the great sheets of screes, glaciers of stone covering acres and acres of the smooth hill-side, eating far into the woods below, bowing down the oak scrubs with their weight; and the vast, circular sweeps of down above him, flecked with innumerable dark spots of gorse, each of them guarded where they open into the river chasm by two mighty fortresses of 'giant-snouted crags,'—delicate pink and grey sandstone, from which blocks and crumbling boulders have been toppling slowly down for ages, beneath the frost and the whirlwind, and now lie in long downward streams upon

the slope, as if the mountain had been weeping tears of stone? And then, as the last notes of the mort had died away, did not there come over him an awe at the deathless silence of the woods, not broken, but deepened, by the solemn unvarying monotone of the roaring stream beneath, which flashed and glittered, half-hidden in the dark leafy chasm, in clear, brown pools reflecting every leaf and twig, in boiling pits and walls of foam, ever changing, and yet for ever the same, fleeting on past the poor dead reeking stag, and the silent hounds lying about on the moss-embroidered stones, their lolling tongues showing like bright crimson sparkles in the deep rich Venetian air of the green sombre shades; while the startled water-ousel, with his white breast, flitted a few yards and stopped to stare from a rock's point at the strange intruders; and a single stockdove, out of the bosom of the wood, began calling sadly and softly, with a dreamy peaceful moan? Did he not see and hear all this, for surely it was there to see and hear?

'Not he. The eye only sees that which it brings within the power of seeing; and all I shall say of him is, that a certain apparition in white leathers was at one period of its appearance dimly conscious of equestrian motion towards a certain brown, two-horned phenomenon, and other spotted phenomena, at which he had been taught by habit to make the articulate noises 'stag' and 'hounds,' among certain grey, and green, and brown appearances, at which the same habit and the example of his fellows had taught him to say, 'Rock, and wood, and mountain,' and perhaps the further noises of 'Lovely, splendid, majestic.'

'As usual, sir! You dwellers in Babylon fancy that you have the monopoly of all the intellect, and

all the taste, because you earn your livings by talking about pretty things, and painting pretty things: little do you suspect, shut up together in your little literary worlds, and your artistic worlds, how many thousands of us outside barbarians there are who see as clearly, and enjoy as deeply as you do: but hold their tongues about their own feelings, simply because they have never been driven by emptiness of pocket to look round for methods of expressing them. And, after all—how much of nature can you express? You confest yourself yesterday baffled by all the magnificence around you.'

'Yes! to paint it worthily one would require to be a Turner, a Copley Fielding, and a Creswick, all in one.'

'And did you ever remark how such scenes as this gorge of the 'Waters-meet' stir up a feeling of shame, almost of peevishness, before the sense of a mysterious meaning which we ought to understand and cannot?'

He smiled.

'Our torments do by length of time become our elements; and painful as that sensation is to the earnest artist, he will feel it, I fancy, at last sublime itself into an habitually gentle, reverent, almost melancholy tone of mind, as of a man bearing the burden of an infinite, wonderful message, which his own frivolity and laziness hinder him from speaking out.'

'Then it should beget in him, too, something of merciful indulgence towards the seeming stupidity of those who see, after all, only a very little shallower than he does into the unfathomable depths of nature.'

'Well, sporting books and sportsmen seem to me, by their very object, not to be worth troubling our heads about. Out of nothing, comes nothing. See, my

hands are as soft as any lady's in Belgravia. I could not, to save my life, lift a hundredweight a foot off the ground; while you have been a wild man of the woods, a leaper of ditches, a rower of races, and a wanton destroyer of all animal life: and yet——'

'You would hint politely that you are as open as me to all noble, and chivalrous, and truly manly emotions?'

'What think you?'

'That you are far worthier in such matters than I, friend. But do not forget that it may be your intellect, and your profession—in one word, God's mercy, which have steered you clear of shoals upon which you will find the mass of our class founder. Woe to the class or the nation which has no manly physical training! Look at the manners, the morals, the faces of the young men of the shop-keeping classes, if you wish to see the effects of utterly neglecting the physical development of man; of fancying that all the muscular activity he requires under the sun is to be able to stand behind a counter, or sit on a desk-stool without tumbling off. Be sure, be sure, that ever since the days of the Persians of old, effeminacy, if not twin-sister of cowardice and dishonesty, has always gone hand in hand with them. To that utter neglect of any exercises which call out fortitude, patience, self-dependence, and daring, I attribute a great deal of the low sensuality, the conceited vulgarity, the utter want of a high sense of honour, which is increasing just now among the middle classes; and from which the navigator, the engineer, the miner, and the sailor are comparatively free.'

'And perhaps, too, that similar want of any high sense of honour, which seems, from the religious perio-

dicals, to pervade a large proportion of a certain more venerable profession?'

'Seriously, Claude, I believe you are not far wrong. But we are getting on delicate ground there: however, I have always found, that of whatever profession he may be—to travestie Shakspeare's words,—

> The man that hath not sporting in his soul,
> Is fit for treason's direst stratagems——

and so forth.'

'Civil to me!'

'Oh, you have a sporting soul in you, like hundreds of other Englishmen who never handled rod or gun; or you would not be steering for Exmoor to-day. If a lad be a genius, you may trust him to find some original means for developing his manly energies, whether in art, agriculture, science, or travels, discovery, and commerce. But if he be not, as there are a thousand chances to one he will not be, then whatever you teach him, let the two first things be, as they were with the old Persians, 'To speak the truth, and to draw the bow.'

By this time we had reached the stream, just clearing from the last night's showers. A long transparent amber shallow, dimpled with fleeting silver rings, by rising trout; a low cascade of green-veined snow; a deep, dark pool of swirling orange-brown, walled in with heathery rocks, and paved with sandstone slabs and boulders, distorted by the changing refractions of the eddies,—sight delicious to the angler.

I commenced my sport at once, while Claude wandered up the glen to sketch a knoll of crags, on which a half-wild moorland pony, the only living thing in sight, stood staring and snuffing at the intruder,

his long mane and tail streaming out wildly against the sky.

I had fished on for some hour or two; Claude had long since disappeared among the hills; I fancied myself miles from any human being, when a voice at my elbow startled me:—

'A bleak place for fishing this, sir!'

I turned; it was an old grey-whiskered labouring man, with pick and spade on shoulder, who had crept on me unawares beneath the wall of the neighbouring deer-cover. Keen honest eyes gleamed out from his brown, scarred, weather-beaten face; and as he settled himself against a rock, with the deliberate intention of a chat, I commenced by asking after the landlord of those parts, well known and honoured both by sportsman and by farmer.

'He was gone to Malta—a warmer place that than Exmoor.'

'What! have you been in Malta?'

'Yes, he had been in Malta, and in stranger places yet. He had been a sailor: he had seen the landing in Egypt, and heard the French cannon thundering vainly from the sand-hills on the English boats. He had himself helped to lift Abercrombie up the ship's side to the death-bed of the brave. He had seen Caraccioli hanging at his own yard-arm, and heard (so he said, I know not how correctly) Lady Hamilton order out the barge herself, and row round the frigate of the murdered man, to glut her eyes with her revenge. He had seen, too, the ghastly corpse floating upright, when Nelson and the enchantress met their victim, returned from the sea-depths to stare at them, as Banquo's ghost upon Macbeth. But she was 'a mortal fine woman,' was Lady Hamilton, though

she was a queer one, and 'cruel kind to the sailors;' and many a man she saved from flogging; and one from hanging, too; that was a marine that got a-stealing; for Nelson, though he was kind enough, yet it was a word and a blow with him; and quite right he, sir; for there be such rascals on board ship, that if you arn't as sharp with them as with wild beastesses, no man's life, nor the ship's neither, would be worth a day's purchase.'

So he, with his simple straightforward notions of right and wrong, worth much maudlin unmerciful indulgence which we hear in these days: and yet not going to the bottom of the matter either, as we shall see in the next war. But, rambling on, he told me how he had come home, war-worn and crippled, to marry a wife and get tall sons, and lay his bones in his native village; till which time (for death to the aged poor man is a Sabbath, of which he talks freely, calmly, even joyously) 'he just got his bread, by the squire's kindness, patching and mending at the stone deer-fences.'

I gave him something to buy tobacco, and watched him as he crawled away, with a sort of stunned surprise. And he had actually seen Nelson sit by Lady Hamilton! It was so strange, to have that gay Italian bay, with all its memories,—the orgies of Baiæ, and the unburied wrecks of ancient towns, with the smoking crater far above; and the world-famous Nile-mouths, and those great old wars, big with the destinies of the world; and those great old heroes, with their awful deeds for good and evil, all brought so suddenly and livingly before me, up there in the desolate moorland, where the deer, and birds, and heath, and rushes were even as they had been from the beginning. Like

Wordsworth with his Leech-Gatherer (a poem which I, in spite of laughter, will rank among his very highest),—

> While he was talking thus, the lonely place,
> The old man's shape, and speech—all troubled me:
> In my mind's eye I seemed to see him pace
> About the weary moors continually,
> Wandering about alone and silently.
> . . . . . and when he ended,
> I could have laughed myself to scorn to find
> In that decrepit man so firm a mind.

Just then I heard a rustle, and turning, saw Claude toiling down to me over the hill-side. He joined me, footsore and weary, but in great excitement; for the first minute or two he could not speak, and at last,—

'Oh, I have seen such a sight!—but I will tell you how it all was. After I left you I met a keeper. He spoke civilly to me—you know my antipathy to game and those who live thereby: but there was a wild, bold, self-helping look about him and his gun alone there in the waste—and after all he was a man and a brother. Well, we fell into talk, and fraternized; and at last he offered to take me to a neighbouring hill and show me 'sixty head of red-deer all together:' and as he spoke he looked quite proud of his words. 'I was lucky,' he said, 'to come just then, for the stags had all just got their heads again.' At which speech I wondered; but was silent, and followed him, I, Claude the Cockney, such a walk as I shall never take again. Behold these trousers—behold these hands! scratched to pieces by crawling on all-fours through the heather. But I saw them.'

'A sight worth many pairs of plaid trousers?'

'Worth Saint Chrysostom's seven years' nakedness on all-fours! And so I told the fellow, who by some cunning calculations about wind, and sun, and so forth,

which he imparted to my uncomprehending ears, brought me suddenly to the top of a little crag, below which, some hundred yards off, the whole herd stood, stags, hinds—but I can't describe them. I have not brought away a scrap of sketch, though we watched them full ten minutes undiscovered; and then the stare, and the toss of those antlers, and the rush! That broke the spell with me; for I had been staring stupidly at them, trying in vain to take in the wonder, with the strangest new excitement heaving and boiling up in my throat; and at the sound of their hoofs on the turf I woke, and found the keeper staring, not at them, but at me, who, I verily believe, had something very like a tear in these excitable eyes of mine.

"'Arn't you well, sir?' said he. 'You needn't be afeard; it's only at the fall of the year the stags is wicked.'

'I don't know what I answered at first; but the fellow understood me when I shook his hand frantically, and told him that I should thank him to the last day of my life, and that I would not have missed it for a thousand pounds. In part-proof whereof I gave him a sovereign on the spot, which seemed to clear my character in his eyes as much as the crying at the sight of a herd of deer had mystified it.'

'Claude, well-beloved,' said I, 'will you ever speak contemptuously of sportsmen any more?'

"'Do Manus,' I have been vilifying them, as one does most things in the world, only for want of understanding them. How shall I do penance? Go and take service with Edwin Landseer, as pupil, colour-grinder, footboy.'

'You will then be very near to a very great poet,' quoth I, 'and one whose works will become, as cen-

turies roll on, more and more valuable to art and to science, and, possibly, to something higher than either.'

'I begin to guess your meaning,' answered Claude.

'So we lounged, and dreamt, and fished, in heathery Highland,' as Mr. Clough would say, while the summer snipes flitted whistling up the shallow before us, and the soft, south-eastern clouds slid lazily across the sun, and the little trout snapped and dimpled at a tiny partridge hackle, with a twist of orange silk, whose elegance of shape and colour reconciled Claude's heart somewhat to my everlasting whipping of the water. When at last:—

'You seem to have given up catching anything. You have not stirred a fish in these last two pools, except that little saucy yellow shrimp, who jumped over your fly, and gave a spiteful slap at it with his tail.'

Too true; and what could be the cause? Had that impudent sand-piper frightened all the fish on his way up? Had an otter paralysed them with terror for the morning? Or had a stag been down to drink? We saw the fresh slot of his broad claws, by the bye, in the mud a few yards back.

'We must have seen the stag himself, if he had been here lately,' said Claude.

'Mr. Landseer knows too well by this time that that is a non sequitur.'

'I'm no more a non sequitur than you are,' answered the Cornish magistrate to the barrister.

'Fish and deer, friend, see us purblind sons of men somewhat more quickly than we see them, fear sharpening the senses. Perhaps, after all, the fault is in your staring white-straw hat, a garment which has spoilt many a good day's fishing. Ah, no! there is the

cause; the hat of a mightier than you—the thunder-spirit himself. Thor is at hand, while the breeze, awe-stricken, falls dead calm before his march. Behold, climbing above that eastern ridge, his huge powdered cauliflower-wig, barred with a grey horizontal handkerchief of mist.'

'Oh, profane and uncomely simile!—which will next, I presume, liken the coming hailstorm to hair-powder shaken from the said wig.'

'To shot rather than to powder. Flee, oh, flee to yonder pile of crags, and thank your stars that there is one at hand; for these mountain tornados are at once Tropic in their ferocity and Siberian in their cutting cold.'

Down it came. The brown hills vanished in white sheets of hail, first falling perpendicularly, then slanting and driving furiously before the cold blast which issued from the storm. The rock above us rang with the thunder-peals; and the lightning, which might have fallen miles away, seemed to our dazzled eyes to dive into the glittering river at our feet. We sat silent some half-hour, listening to the voice of One more mighty than ourselves; and it was long after the uproar had rolled away among the hills, and a steady, sighing sheet of warmer rains, from banks of low grey fog, had succeeded the rattling of the hail upon the crisp heather, that I turned to Claude.

'And now, since your heart is softened toward these wild, stag-hunting, trout-fishing, jovial west-countrymen, consider whether it should not be softened likewise toward those old outlaw ballads which I have never yet been able to make you admire. They express feelings not yet extinct in the minds of a large portion of the lower orders, as you would know had you lived, like me, all your life in poaching counties, and on the edges of one forest after another,—feelings which must

be satisfied, even in the highest development of the civilization of the future, for they are innate in every thoughtful and energetic race,—feelings which, though they have often led to crime, have far oftener delivered from swinish sensuality; the feelings which drove into the merry greenwood 'Robin Hood, Scarlet, and John;' 'Adam Bell, and Clym of the Cleugh, and William of Cloudislee;' the feelings which prompted one half of his inspiration to the nameless immortal who wrote the 'Nutbrown Maid;'—feelings which could not then, and cannot now, be satisfied by the drudgery of a barbaric agriculture, which, without science, economy, or enterprise, offers no food for the higher instincts of the human mind, its yearnings after Nature, after freedom, and the noble excitement of self-independent energy.'

Our talk ended: but the rain did not: and we were at last fain to leave our shelter, and let ourselves be blown by the gale (the difficulty being not to progress forward, but to keep our feet) back to the shed where our ponies were tied, and to canter home to Lynmouth, with the rain cutting our faces like showers of pebbles, and our little mountain ponies staggering before the wind, with their long tails about our ears, and more than once, if Londoners will believe me, blown sheer up against the bank by some mad gust, which rushed perpendicularly, not down, but up, the vast chasms of the glens below.

II.—The Coast Line.

It is four o'clock on a May morning, and Claude and I are just embarking on board a Clovelly trawling-skiff, which, having disposed of her fish at various ports along the Channel, is about to run leisurely homewards with an ebb tide, and a soft north-easterly breeze.

So farewell, fair Lynmouth: and ye mountain storm-spirits, send us a propitious day; and dismiss those fantastic clouds which are coquetting with your thrones, crawling down one mountain face, and whirling and leaping up another, in wreaths of snow, and dun, and amber, pierced every minute by some long glittering upward arrow from the level sun, which gilds grey crags and downs a thousand feet above, while underneath the mountain gorges still sleep black and cold in shade.

There, they have heard us! the cap rises off the 'Summer-house hill,' that eight hundred feet of upright wall, which seems ready to topple down into the nest of be-myrtled cottages at its foot; and as we sweep out into the deeper water the last mist-flake streams up from the Foreland, and vanishes in white threads into the stainless blue.

'Look at the colours of that Foreland!' cried Claude, in ecstasy. 'The vast, simple monotone of pearly green, broken only at intervals by blood-red stains, where the turf has slipped and left the fresh rock bare, and all glimmering softly through a delicate blue haze, like the bloom on a half-ripened plum!'

'And look, too, how the grey pebble beach is already dancing and quivering in the mirage which steams up, like the hot breath of a limekiln, from the drying stones! Talk of 'glazings and scumblings,' ye artists! and bungle at them as you will, what are they to Nature's own glazings, deeping every instant there behind us?'

'Mock me not. I have walked up and down here with a humbled and a broken spirit, and had nearly forsworn the audacity of painting anything beyond a beech stem, or a frond of fern.'

'The little infinite in them would have baffled you

just as much as the only somewhat bigger infinite of the hills on which they grow.'

'Confest: and so farewell to unpaintable Lynmouth! Farewell to the charming contrast of civilized English landscape-gardening, with its villas, and its exotics, and its evergreens, thus strangely and yet harmoniously, confronted with the mad chaos of the rocks and mountain-streams. Those grounds of Sir William Herries' are a double paradise, the wild Eden of the Past side by side with the cultivated Eden of the Future. How its alternations of Art and Savagery at once startle and relieve the sense, as you pass suddenly out of wildernesses of piled boulders, and torrent-shattered trees, and the roar of a hundred fern-fringed waterfalls, into 'trim walks, and fragrant alleys green,' and the door of a summer-house transports you at a step from Richmond to the Alps. Happy he who 'possesses,' as the world calls it, and happier still he whose taste could organize, that fairy bower.'

So he, magniloquently, as was his wont; and yet his declamations always flowed with such a graceful ease, —a simple, smiling earnestness,—an unpractised melody of voice, that what would have been rant from other lips, from his showed only as the healthy enthusiasm of the passionate, all-seeing, all-loving artist.

'Look yonder, again,' said he, gazing up at the huge boulder-strewn hill-side above us. 'One wonders, at that sight, whether the fable of the giants be not true after all,—and that 'Vale of Rocks,' hanging five hundred feet in air, with all its crag-castles, and tottering battlements, and colossal crumbling idols, and great blocks, which hang sloping, caught in act to fall, be not some enormous Cyclopean temple left half-disinterred: or is it a fragment of old Chaos, left unorganized?—or, perhaps, the waste heap of the world, where, after

the rest of England had been made, some angel put up a notice for his fellows, 'Dry rubbish shot here?'

'Not so, unscientific! It is the grandfather of hills,—a fossil bone of some old continent, which stood here ages before England was. And the great earth-angel, who grinds up mountains into paint, as you do bits of ochre, for his 'Continental Sketches,' found in it the materials for a whole dark ground-tone of coal-measures, and a few hundred miles of warm high-lights, which we call New Red Sandstone.'

What a sea-wall they are, those Exmoor hills! Sheer upward from the sea a thousand feet rise the mountains; and as we slide and stagger lazily along before the dying breeze, through the deep water which never leaves the cliff, the eye ranges, almost dizzy, up some five hundred feet of rock, dappled with every hue, from the intense dark of the tide-line; through the warm green and brown rock-shadows, out of which the horizontal cracks of the strata loom black, and the breeding gulls show like lingering snow-flakes; up to the middle cliff, where delicate grey fades into pink, pink into red, red into glowing purple; up to where the purple is streaked with glossy ivy wreaths, and black-green yews; up to where all the choir of colours vanishes abruptly on the mid-hill, to give place to one yellowish-grey sheet of upward-down, sweeping aloft smooth and unbroken, except by a lonely stone, or knot of clambering sheep, and stopped by one great rounded waving line, sharp-cut against the brilliant blue. The sheep hang like white daisies upon the steep; and a solitary falcon rides, a speck in air, yet far below the crest of that tall hill. Now he sinks to the cliff edge, and hangs quivering supported, like a kite, by the pressure of his breast and long-carved wings, against the breeze.

There he hangs, the peregrine,—a true 'falcon gentle,' 'sharp-notched, long-taloned, crooked-winged,' whose uncles and cousins, ages since, have struck at roe and crane, and sat upon the wrists of kings. And now he is full proud of any mouse or cliff-lark; like an old Chingachgook, last of the Mohicans, he lingers round 'the hunting-field of his fathers.' So all things end.

> The old order changeth, giving place to the new;
> And God fulfils himself in many ways,
> Lest one good custom should corrupt the world.

'Ay, and the day may come,' said Claude, 'when the brows of that huge High-vere shall be crowned with golden wheat, and every rock-ledge on Trentishoe, like those of Petra and the Rhine, support its garden-bed of artificial soil.'

'And when,' I answered, 'the shingly sides of that great chasm of Headon's Mouth may be clothed with the white mulberry, and the summer limestone-skiffs shall go back freighted with fabrics which vie with the finest woof of Italy and Lyons.'

'You believe, then, in Mrs. Whitby of Lymington?'

'Seeing is believing, Claude: through laughter, and failures, and the stupidity of half-barbarous clods, she persevered in her silk-growing, and succeeded; and I should like to put her book into the hands of every squire in Devon, Cornwall, and the South of Ireland.'

'Or require them to pass an examination in it, as one more among the many books which I intend, in my ideal kingdom, all landlords to read and digest, before they are allowed to take possession of their estates. In the meantime, what is that noble conical hill, which has increased my wonder at the infinite variety of beauty which The Spirit can produce by

combinations so simple as a few grey stones and a sheet of turf?'

'The Hangman.'

'An ominous name. What is its history?'

'Some sheep-stealer, they say, clambering over a wall with his booty slung round his neck, was literally hung by the poor brute's struggles, and found days after on the mountain-side, a blackened corpse suspended on one side of the wall, with the sheep hanging on the other, and the ravens —— You may fill up the picture for yourself.'

But, see, as we round the Hangman, what a change of scene—The huge square-blocked sandstone cliffs dip suddenly under dark slate-beds, fantastically bent and broken by primeval earthquakes. Wooded combes, and craggy ridges of rich pasture-land, wander and slope towards a labyrinth of bush-fringed coves, black isolated tide-rocks, and land-locked harbours. There shines among the woods the Castle of Watermouth, on its lovely little salt-water loch, the safest harbour on the coast; and there is Combe-Martin, mile-long man-stye, which seven centuries of fruitless silver-mining, and of the right (now deservedly lost) of 'sending a talker to the national palaver,' have neither cleansed nor civilized. Turn, turn thy head away, dear Claude, lest even at this distance some foul odour taint the summer airs, and complete the misfortune already presaged by that pale, sad face, sickening in the burning calm! For this great sun-roasted fire-brick of the Exmoor range is fairly 'burning up the breeze,' and we have nothing but the tide to drift us slowly down to Ilfracombe.

Now we open Rillage, and now Hillsborough, two of the most picturesque of headlands; see how their huge round foreheads of glistening grey shale sink down into two dark, jagged moles, running far out to sea-

ward, and tapering off, each into a long black horizontal line, vanishing at last beneath its lace-fringe of restless hissing foam. How grand the contrast of the delicate severe lightness of those sea-lines, with the vast solid mass which rests upon them! Look, too, at the glaring lights and the Tartarean shadows of those gloomy chasms and caves, which the tide never leaves, or the foot of man explores; and listen how, at every rush of the long ground-swell, mysterious mutterings, solemn sighs, sudden thunders, as of a pent-up earthquake, boom out of them across the glassy swell. Look at those blasts of delicate vapour that shoot up from hidden rifts, and hang a moment, and vanish; and those green columns of wave which rush mast high up the perpendicular walls, and then fall back and outwards in a waterfall of foam, lacing the black rocks with a thousand snowy streams. There they fall, and leap, and fall again. And so they did yesterday, and the day before; and so they did centuries ago, when the Danes swept past them, battleworn, and sad of heart for the loss of the magic raven flag, from the fight at Appledore, to sit down and starve on 'the island of Bradanrelice, which men call Flat Holms.' Ay, and even so they leapt and fell, before a sail gleamed on the Severn sea, when the shark and the ichthyosaur paddled beneath the shade of tropic forests—now scanty turf and golden gorse. And so they will leap and fall on, on, through the centuries and the ages. Oh dim abyss of Time, into which we peer shuddering, what will be the end of thee, and of this ceaseless coil and moan of waters? It is true, that when thou shalt be no more, then, too, 'there shall be no more sea;' and this ocean bed, this great grave of fertility, into which all earth's wasted riches stream, day and night, from hill and town, shall rise and become fruitful soil, corn-field and

meadow-land; and earth shall team as thick with living men as bean-fields with the summer bees? What a consummation! At least there is One greater than sea, or time: and the Judge of all the earth will do right.

But there is Ilfracombe, with its rock-walled harbour, its little wood of masts within, its white terraces, rambling up the hills, and its capstone sea-walk, the finest 'marine parade,' as flunkeydom terms it, in all England, except that splendid Hoe at Plymouth; 'Lam Goemagot,' Gog-magog's leap, as the old Britons called it, over which Corineus threw that mighty giant. And there is the little isolated rock-chapel, where, seven hundred years ago, our west-country forefathers used to go to pray St. Nicholas for deliverance from shipwreck,—a method lovingly regretted by some, as a 'pious idea of the Ages of faith.' I, however, prefer the present method of lighthouses and the worthy Trinity Board, as actually more godly and 'faithful,' as well as more useful; and, I suspect, so do the sailors themselves.

But Claude is by this time nearly sick of the roasting calm, and the rolling ground-swell, and the smell of fish, and is somewhat sleepy also, between early rising and incoherent sermons; wherefore, if he takes my advice, he will stay and recruit himself at Ilfracombe, before he proceeds further with his self-elected cicerone on the grand tour of North Devon. Believe me, Claude, you will not stir from the place for a month at least. For be sure, if you are sea-sick, or heart-sick, or pocket-sick either, there is no pleasanter or cheaper place of cure (to indulge in a puff of a species now well-nigh obsolete, the puff honest and true) than this same Ilfracombe, with its quiet nature and its quiet luxury, its rock fairy-land and its sea-walks, its downs and combes,

its kind people, and, if possible, its still kinder climate, which combines the soft warmth of South Devon with the bracing freshness of the Welsh mountains; where winter has slipped out of the list of the seasons, and mother Earth makes up for her summer's luxury by fasting, 'not in sackcloth and ashes, but in new silk and old sack;' and instead of standing three months chin deep in ice, and christening great snowballs her 'friends and family,' as St. Francis of Assizi did of old, knows no severer asceticism than tepid shower-baths, and a parasol of soft grey mist.

III.—Morte.

I had been wandering over the centre of Exmoor, killing trout as I went, through a country which owes its civilization and tillage to the spirit of one man, who has found stag preserving by no means incompatible with large agricultural improvements; among a population who still evince an unpleasant partiality for cutting and carrying farmers' crops by night, without leave or licence, and for housebreaking after the true classic method of Athens, by fairly digging holes through the house walls; a little nook of primeval savagery fast reorganizing itself under the influences of these better days. I had been on Dartmoor, too; but of that noble mountain range so much has been said and sung of late, that I really am afraid it is becoming somewhat cockney and trite. Far and wide I had wandered, rod in had, becoming a boy again in the land of my boyhood, till, once more at Ilfracombe, opposite me sat Claude Mellot, just beginning to bloom again into cheerfulness.

We were on the point of starting for Morte, and so round to Saunton Court, and the sands beyond it, where a Clovelly trawler, which I had chartered for the occa-

sion, had promised to send a boat on shore and take us off, provided the wind lay off the land.

But, indeed, the sea was calm as glass, the sky cloudless azure; and the doubt was not whether we should be able to get on board through the surf, but whether, having got on board, we should not lie till nightfall, as idle

> As a painted ship,
> Upon a painted ocean.

And now behold us on our way up lovely combes, with their green copses, and ridges of rock, and golden furze, fruit-laden orchards, and slopes of emerald pasture, pitched as steep as house-roofs, where the red long-horns are feeding, with their tails a yard above their heads; and under us, seen in bird's-eye view, the ground-plans of the little snug farms and homesteads of the Damnonii, 'dwellers in the valley,' as we West-countrymen were called of old. Now we are leaving them far below us; the blue hazy sea is showing far above the serrated ridge of the Tors, and their huge bank of sunny green; and before us is a desolate tableland of rushy pastures and mouldering banks, festooned with the delicate network of the little ivy-leaved campanula, loveliest of British wild-flowers, fit with its hair-like stems and tiny bells of blue to wreathe the temples of Titania. Alas! we have passed out of the world into limbus patrum, and the region of ineffectuality and incompleteness. The only cultivators here, and through thousands of acres in the North of Devon, are the rook and mole: and yet the land is rich enough—the fat deep crumbling of the shale and iron-stone returning year by year into the mud, from whence it hardened ages since. There are scores of farms of far worse land in mid-England, under 'a four course shift,' yielding their load of wheat an acre. When will that land do as much?

When will the spirit of Smith of Deanston and Grey of Dilston descend on North Devon? When will some true captain of industry, and Theseus of the nineteenth century, like the late Mr. Warnes of Trimmingham, teach the people here to annihilate poor-rates by growing flax upon some of the finest flax land, and in the finest flax climate, that we have in England? The shrewd Cornishmen of Launceston and Bodmin have awakened long ago to 'the new gospel of fertility.' When will North Devon awake?

'When landlords and farmers,' said Claude, 'at last acknowledge their divine vocation, and feel it a noble and heaven-ordained duty to produce food for the people of England; when they learn that to grow rushes where they might grow corn, ay, to grow four quarters of wheat where they might grow five, is to sin against God's blessings and against the English nation. No wonder that sluggards like these cry out for protection; that those who cannot take care of the land feel that they themselves need artificial care.'

'We will not talk politics, Claude. Our modern expediency-mongers have made them pro tempore an extinct science. 'Let the dead bury their dead.' The social questions are nowadays becoming far more important than the mere House of Commons ones.'

'There does seem here and there,' he said, 'some sign of improvement. I see the paring plough at work on one field and another.'

'Swiftly goes the age, and slowly crawls improvement. The greater part of that land will be only broken up to be exhausted by corn-crop after corn-crop, till it can bear no more, and the very manure which is drawn home from it in the shape of a few turnips will be wasted by every rain of heaven, and the straw probably used to mend bad places in the road with; while

the land returns to twenty years of worse sterility than ever; on the ground that—

'Veather did zo, and gramfer did zo, and why shouldn't Jan do the zame?' * * * *

'But here is Morte below us. 'The little grey church on the windy shore,' which once belonged to William de Tracy, one of your friend Thomas à Becket's murderers. If you wish to vent your wrath against those who cut off your favourite Saxon hero, there is a tomb in the church which bears De Tracy's name; over which rival Dryasdusts contend fiercely with paper-arrows: the one party asserting that he became a priest, and died here in the wilderness; the others that the tomb is of later date, that he fled hence to Italy, under favour of a certain easy-going Bishop of Exeter, and died penitent and duly shriven, according to the attestations of a certain or uncertain Bishop of Cosenza.'

'Peace be with him and with the bishop! The flight to Italy seems a very needless precaution to a man who owned this corner of the world. A bailiff would have had even less chance here then than in Connemara a hundred years ago.'

'He certainly would have fed the crabs and rock-cod in two hours after his arrival. Nevertheless, I believe the Cosenza story is the safer one.'

'What a chaos of rock-ridges!—Old starved mother Earth's bare-worn ribs and joints peeping out through every field and down; and on three sides of us, the sullen thunder of the unseen surge. What a place for some 'gloom-pampered man' to sit and misanthropize!'

'Morte,' says the Devonshire proverb, 'is the place on earth which heaven made last, and the devil will take first.'

'All the fitter for a misanthrope. But where are the trees? I have not seen one for the last four miles.'

'Nor will you for a few miles more. Whatever will grow here (and most things will) they will not, except, at least, hereafter the sea-pine of the Biscay shore. You would know why, if you had ever felt a south-westerly gale here, when the foam-flakes are flying miles inland, and you are fain to cling breathless to bank and bush, if you want to get one look at those black fields of shark's-tooth tide-rocks, champing and churning the great green rollers into snow. Wild folk are these here, gatherers of shell-fish and laver, and merciless to wrecked vessels, which they consider as their own by immemorial usage, or rather right divine. Significant, how an agricultural people is generally as cruel to wrecked seamen, as a fishing one is merciful. I could tell you twenty stories of the baysmen down there to the westward risking themselves like very heroes to save strangers' lives, and beating off the labouring folk who swarmed down for plunder from the inland hills.'

'Knowledge, you see, breeds sympathy and love. But what a merciless coast!'

'Hardly a winter passes without a wreck or two. You see there lying about the timbers of more than one tall ship. You see, too, that black rock a-wash far out at sea, apparently a submarine outlier of the north horn of this vast rock-amphitheatre below us. That is the Morte stone, the 'Death-rock,' as the Normans christened it of old; and it does not belie its name even now. See how, even in this calm, it hurls up its column of spray at every wave; and then conceive being entrapped between it and the cliffs, on some blinding, whirling winter's night, when the land is

shrouded thick in clouds, and the roar of the breakers hardly precedes by a minute the crash of your bows against the rocks.'

'I never think, on principle, of things so painful, and yet so irrelievable. Yet why does not your much-admired Trinity House erect a light there?'

'So ask the sailors; for it is indeed one of the gate-way-jambs of the Channel, and the deep water and the line of coast tempt all craft to pass as close to it as possible.'

'Look at that noble sheet of yellow sand below us now, banked to the inland with sandhills and sunny downs, and ending abruptly at the foot of that sombre wall of slate-hill, which runs out like a huge pier into the sea some two miles off.'

'That is Woollacombe: but here on our right is a sight worth seeing. Every gully and creek there among the rocks is yellow, but not with sand. Those are shells; the sweepings of the ocean bed for miles around, piled there, millions upon millions, yards deep, in every stage of destruction. There they lie grinding to dust; and every gale brings in fresh myriads from the inexhaustible sea-world, as if Death could be never tired of devouring, or God of making. The brain grows dizzy and tired, as one's feet crunch over the endless variety of their forms—and then one recollects that every one of them has been a living thing—a whole history of birth, and growth, and propagation, and death. Waste it cannot be, or cruelty on the part of the Maker: but why this infinite development of live, apparently only to furnish out of it now and then a cartload of shellsand to these lazy farmers?'

'After all, there is not so much life in all those shells put together as in one little child: and it may

die the hour that it is born! What we call life is but an appearance and a becoming; the true life of existence belongs only to spirits. And whether or not we, or the sea-shell there, are at any given moment helping to make up part of some pretty little pattern in this great kaleidoscope called the material universe: yet, in the spirit all live to Him, and shall do so for ever.'

And thereon he rambled off into a long lecture on 'species-spirits,' and 'individual-spirits,' and 'personal-spirits,' doubtless most important. But I, what between the sun, the luncheon, and the metaphysic, sank into soft slumbers, from which I was only awakened by the carriage stopping, according to our order, on the top of Saunton hill.

We left the fly, and wandered down towards the old gabled 'court,' nestling amid huge walnuts in its southward glen; while before us spread a panorama, half sea, half land, than which, perhaps, our England owns no lovelier.

At our feet was a sea of sand—for the half-mile to the right smooth as a floor, bounded by a broad band of curling waves, which crept slowly shorewards with the advancing tide. Right underneath us the sand was drifted for miles into fantastic hills, which quivered in the heat, the glaring yellow of its lights chequered by delicate pink shadows and sheets of grey-green bent. To the left were rich alluvial marshes, covered with red cattle sleeping in the sun, and laced with creeks and flowery dykes; and here and there a scarlet line, which gladdened Claude's eye as being 'a bit of positive colour in the foreground,' and mine, because they were draining tiles. Beyond again, two broad tide-rivers, spotted with white and red-brown sails, gleamed like

avenues of silver, past knots of gay dwellings, and tall lighthouses, and church-towers, and wandered each on its own road, till they vanished among the wooded hills. On the eastern horizon the dark range of Exmoor sank gradually into lower and more broken ridges, which rolled away, woodland beyond woodland, till all outlines were lost in purple haze; while, far beyond, the granite peaks of Dartmoor hung like a delicate blue cloud, and enticed the eye away into infinity. From hence, as our eyes swept round the horizon, the broken hills above the river's mouth gradually rose into the tableland of the 'barren coal-measures' some ten miles off,—a long straight wall of cliffs which bounded the broad bay, buried in deepest shadow, except where the opening of some glen revealed far depths of sunlit wood. A faint perpendicular line of white houses, midway along the range, marked our destination; and far to the westward, the land ended sheer and suddenly at the cliffs of Hartland, the 'Promontory of Hercules,' as the old Romans called it, to reappear some ten miles out in the Atlantic, in the blue flat-topped island of Lundy, so exactly similar in height and form to the opposite cape, that it required no scientific imagination to supply the vast gap which the primæval currents had sawn out. There it all lay beneath us like a map; its thousand hues toned down harmoniously into each other by the summer haze, and 'the eye was not filled with seeing,' nor the spirit with the intoxicating sight of infinitely various life and form in perfectest repose.

I was the first to break the silence.

'Claude, well-beloved, will you not sketch a little?'

No answer.

'Not even rhapsodize? call it 'lovely, exquisite, grand, majestic?' There are plenty of such words in worldlings' mouths—not a young lady but would burst

out with some enthusiastic commonplace at such a sight—surely one or other of them must be appropriate.'

'Silence, profane! and take me away from this. Let us go down, and hide our stupidities among those sandhills, and so forget the whole. What use standing here to be maddened by this tantalizing earth-spirit, who shows us such glorious things, and will not tell us what they mean?'

So down we went upon the 'burrows,' among the sands, which hid from us every object but their own chaotic curves and mounds. Above, a hundred sky-larks made the air ring with carollings; strange and gaudy plants flecked the waste round us; and the great spurge-moths, only found upon those burrows, whirred like humming-birds over our heads, or hung poised with their pink and grey wings outspread on the tall stalks of marram grass. All at once a cloud hid the sun, and a summer whirlwind, presage of the thunderstorm, swept past us, carrying up with it a column of dry sand, and rattling the dry bents over our heads.

'What a chill, doleful sigh comes from those reeds!' said Claude. 'I can conceive this desert, beneath a driving winter's sky instead of this burning azure, one of the most desolate places on the earth.'

'Ay, desolate enough,' I said, as we walked down beyond the tide-mark, over the vast fields of ribbed and splashy sands, 'when the dead shells are rolling and crawling up the beach in wreaths before the gale, with a ghastly rattle as of the dry bones in the 'Valley of Vision,' and when not a flower shows on that sand-cliff, which is now one broad bed of yellow, scarlet, and azure.'

'That is the first spot in England,' said Claude,

'except, of course, 'the meads of golden king-cups,' where I have seen wild flowers give a tone to the colouring of the whole landscape, as they are said to do in the prairies of Texas. And look how flowers and cliff are both glowing in a warm green haze, like that of Cuyp's wonderful sandcliff picture in the Dulwich Gallery, wonderful, as I think, and true—let Mr. Ruskin revile it as much as he will.'

'Strange, that you should have quoted that picture here; its curious resemblance to this very place first awoke in me, years ago, a living interest in landscape-painting. But look there; even in these grand summer days there is a sight before us sad enough. There are the ribs of some ill-fated ship, a man-of-war, too, as the story goes, standing like huge black fangs, half-buried in the sand. And off what are those two ravens rising, stirring up with their great obscene wings a sickly, putrescent odour? A corpse?'

No, it was not a corpse; but the token of many corpses. A fragment of some ship; its gay green paint and half-effaced gilding contrasting mockingly with the long ugly feathered barnacle-shells, which clustered on it, rotting into slime beneath the sun, and torn and scattered by the greedy beaks of the ravens.

'In what tropic tornado, or on what coral-key of the Bahamas, months ago, to judge by those barnacles, did that tall ship go down? How long has this scrap of wreck gone wandering down the Gulf-stream, from Newfoundland to the Azores, from the Azores to Biscay, from Biscay hitherward on its homeless voyage past the Norwegian shore? And who were all those living men who 'went down to Hades, even many stalwart souls of heroes,' to give no sign until the sea shall render up her dead? And every one of them had a

father and mother!—a wife, perhaps, and children, waiting for him!—at least a whole human life, childhood, boyhood, manhood, in him! All those years of toil and education, to get him so far on his life-voyage; and here is the end thereof!'

'Say rather, the beginning thereof,' Claude answered, stepping into the boat. 'This wreck is but a torn scrap of the chrysalis-cocoon; we may meet the butterflies themselves hereafter.'

* * * * *

'And now we are on board; and alas! some time before the breeze will be so. Take care of that huge boom, landsman Claude, swaying and sweeping backwards and forwards across the deck, unless you wish to be knocked overboard. Take care, too, of that loose rope's end, unless you wish to have your eyes cut out. Take my advice, lie down here across the deck, as I am doing. Cover yourself with great-coats, like an Irishman, to keep yourself cool, and let us meditate a little on this strange thing, and strange place, which holds us now.

'Look at those spars, how they creak and groan with every heave of the long glassy swell. How those sails flap, and thunder, and rage, with useless outcries and struggles—only because they are idle. Let the wind take them, and they will be steady, silent in an instant—their deafening, dissonant grumbling exchanged for the soft victorious song of the breeze through the rigging, musical, self-contented, as of bird on bough. So it is through life, Claude; there is no true rest but labour. 'No true misery,' as Carlyle says, 'but in that of not being able to work.' You may call it a pretty conceit. I call it a great world-wide law, which reaches from earth to heaven. Whatever the Preacher

may have thought it in a moment of despondency, what is it but a blessing that 'sun, and wind, and rivers, and ocean,' as he says, and 'all things, are full of labour—man cannot utter it.' This sea which bears us would rot and poison, did it not sweep in and out here twice a-day in swift refreshing current; nay, more, in the very water which laps against our bows troops of glossy-limbed negro girls may have hunted the pur-blind shark in West Indian harbours, beneath glaring white-walled towns, with their rows of green jalousies, and cocoa-nuts, and shaddock groves. For on those white sands there to our left, year by year, are washed up foreign canes, cassia beans, and tropic seeds; and sometimes, too, the tropic ocean snails, with their fragile shells of amethystine blue, come floating in mysteriously in fleets from the far west out of the passing Gulf-stream, where they have been sailing out their little life, never touching shore or ground, but buoyed each by his cluster of air-bubbles, pumped in at will under the skin of his tiny foot, by some cunning machinery of valves—small creatures truly, but very wonderful to men who have learned to reverence not merely the size of things, but the wisdom of their idea,—rising strange longings and dreams about that submarine ocean-world which stretches, teeming with richer life than this terrestrial one, away, away there westward, down the path of the sun, toward the future centre of the world's destiny.

'Wonderful ocean-world! three-fifths of our planet! Can it be true that no rational beings are denizens there? Science is severely silent—having as yet seen no mermaids: our captain there forward is not silent—if he has not seen them, plenty of his friends have. The young man here has been just telling me that it was only last month one followed a West Indiaman

right across the Atlantic. 'For,' says he, 'there must be mermaids, and such-like. Do you think God would have made all that water there only for the herrings and mackerel?'

I do not know, Tom: but I, too, suspect not; and I do know that honest men's guesses are sometimes found by science to have been prophecies, and that there is no smoke without fire, and few universal legends without their nucleus of fact. After all, those sea-ladies are too lovely a dream to part with in a hurry, at the mere despotic fiat of stern old Dame Analysis, divine and reverend as she is. Why, like Keats's Lamia,

> Must all charms flee
> At the mere touch of cold Philosophy,

who will not even condescend to be awe-struck at the new wonders which she herself reveals daily? Perhaps too, according to the Duke of Wellington's great dictum, that each man must be the best judge in his own profession, sailors may know best whether mermaids exist or not. Besides, was it not here on Croyde Sands, abreast of us, this very last summer, that a maiden—by which beautiful old word West-country people still call young girls—was followed up the shore by a mermaid who issued from the breakers, green-haired, golden-combed, and all; and, fleeing home, took to her bed and died, poor thing! of sheer terror in the course of a few days, persisting in her account of the monster? True, the mermaid may have been an overgrown Lundy Island seal, carried out of his usual haunts by spring-tides and a school of fish. Be it so. Lundy and its seals are wonderful enough in all reason to thinking men, as it looms up there out of the Atlantic, with its two great square headlands, not twenty miles from us, in the white summer haze. We will go

there some day, Claude, and pick up a wild tale or two about it.

But, lo! a black line creeps up the western horizon. Tom, gesticulating, swears that he sees 'a billow break.' True: there they come; the great white horses, that 'champ and chafe, and toss in the spray.' That long-becalmed trawler to seaward fills, and heels over, and begins to tug and leap, like an impatient horse, at the weight of her heavy trawl. Five minutes more, and the breeze will be down upon us. The young men whistle openly to woo it; the old father thinks such a superstition somewhat beneath both his years and his religion, but cannot help pursing up his lips into a sly 'whe-eugh' when he has got well forward out of sight.

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Five long minutes; there is a breath of air; a soft distant murmur; the white horses curve their necks, and dive and vanish; and rise again like snowy porpoises, nearer, and nearer, and nearer. Father and sons are struggling with that raving, riotous, drunken squaresail forward; while we haul away upon the main-sheet.

When will it come? It is dying back—sliding past us. 'Hope deferred maketh the heart sick.' No, louder and nearer swells 'the voice of many waters,' 'the countless laugh of ocean,' like the mirth of ten thousand girls, before us, behind us, round us; and the oily swell darkens into crisp velvet-green, till the air strikes us, and heels us over; and leaping, plunging, thrashing our bows into the seas, we spring away close-hauled upon the ever-freshening breeze, while Claude is holding on by ropes and bulwarks, and I, whose sea-legs have not yet forgot their craft, am swinging like a pendulum as I pace the deck, enjoying, as the Norse

vikings would have called it, 'the gallop of the flying sea-horse, and the shiver of her tawny wings.'

Exquisite motion! more maddening than the smooth floating stride of the race-horse, or the crash of the thorn-hedges before the stalwart hunter, or the swaying of the fir-boughs in the gale, when we used to climb as schoolboys after the lofty hawk's nest; but not so maddening as the new motion of our age—the rush of the express-train, when the live iron pants and leaps and roars through the long chalk cutting; and white mounds gleam cold a moment against the sky, and vanish; and rocks, and grass, and bushes, fleet by in dim blended lines; and the long hedges revolve like the spokes of a gigantic wheel; and far below, meadows, and streams, and homesteads, with all their lazy auld-warld life open for an instant, and then rush away; while awe-struck, silent, choked with the mingled sense of pride and helplessness, we are swept on by that great pulse of England's life-blood, rushing down her iron veins; and dimly out of the future looms the fulfilment of our primæval mission, to conquer and subdue the earth, and space too, and time, and all things,—even, hardest of all tasks, yourselves, my cunning brothers; ever learning some fresh lesson, except that hardest one of all, that it is the Spirit of God which giveth you understanding.

'Yes, great railroads, and great railroad age, who would exchange you, with all your sins, for any other time? For swiftly as rushes matter, more swiftly rushes mind,—more swiftly still rushes the heavenly dawn up the eastern sky. 'The night is far spent, the day is at hand' 'Blessed is that servant whom his Lord, when he cometh, shall find watching!'

'But come, my poor Claude, I see you are too sick for such deep subjects: so let us while away the time

by picking the brains of this tall handsome boy at the helm, who is humming a love-song to himself sotto voce, lest it should be overheard by the grey-headed father, who is forward, poring over his Wesleyan hymn-book. He will have something to tell you; he has a soul in him looking out of those wild dark eyes, and delicate aquiline features of his. He is no spade-drudge or bullet-headed Saxon clod; he has in his veins the blood of Danish rovers and passionate southern Milesians, who came hither from Teffrobani, the Isle of Summer, as the old Fenic myths inform us. Come and chat with him. You dare not stir? Perhaps you are in the right. I shall go and fraternize, and bring you reports. * * * *

'He has been, at all events, 'up the Straits' as the Mediterranean voyage is called here, and seen 'Palermy' and the Sicilians. But for his imagination, I confess that what seems to have struck it most was that it was a 'fine place for Jack, for a man could get mools there for a matter of three-halfpence a-day.'

'And was that all you got out of him?' asked Claude, sickly and sulkily.

'Oh, you must not forget the halo of glory and excitement which in a sailor's eyes surrounds the delights of horseback. But he gave me besides a long glowing account of the catechism which they had there, three-quarters-of-a-mile long.'

'Pope Pius's catechism, I suppose?'

'So thought I, at first; but it appeared that all the dead of the city were arranged therein, dried and dressed out in their finest clothes, 'every sect and age,' as Tom said, 'by itself, as natural as life!' whence I opine that he means some catacombs or other.'

Poor Claude could not even get up a smile: but

his sorrows were coming swiftly to an end. The rock clefts grew sharper and sharper before us. The soft masses of the huge bank of wooded cliff rose higher and higher. The white houses of Clovelly, piled stair above stair up the rocks, gleamed more and more brightly out of the green round bosoms of the forest. As we shut in headland after headland, one tall conical rock after another darkened with its black pyramid the bright orb of the setting sun. Soon we began to hear the soft murmur of the snowy surf line; then the merry voices of the children along the shore; and running straight for the cliff-foot, we slipped into the little pier, from whence the red-sailed herring-boats were swarming forth like bees out of a hive, full of gay handsome faces, and all the busy blue-jacketed life of seaport towns, to their night's fishing in the bay.

V.—Clovelly.

A couple of days had passed, and I was crawling up the paved stairs inaccessible to cart or carriage, which are flatteringly denominated 'Clovelly-street,' a landing-net full of shells in one hand, and a couple of mackerel lines in the other; behind me a sheer descent, roof below roof, at an angle of 75°, to the pier and bay, 200 feet below, and in front of me, another hundred feet above, a green amphitheatre of oak, and ash, and larch, shutting out all but a narrow slip of sky, across which the low, soft, formless mist was crawling, opening every instant to show some gap of intense dark rainy blue, and send down a hot vaporous gleam of sunshine upon the white cottages, with their grey steaming roofs, and bright green railings, packed one above another upon the ledges of the cliff; and on the tall tree-fuchsias and

gaudy dahlias in the little scraps of court-yard, calling the rich faint odour out of the verbenas and jessamines, and, alas! out of the herring-heads and tails also, as they lay in the rivulet; and lighting up the wings of the gorgeous butterflies, almost unknown in our colder eastern climate, which fluttered from woodland down to garden, and from garden up to woodland, and seemed to form the connecting link between that swarming hive of human industry and the deep wild woods in which it was embosomed. So up I was crawling, to dine off gurnards of my own catching,—excellent fish, despised by deluded Cockneys, who fancy that because its head is large and prickly, therefore its flesh is not as firm, and sweet, and white, as that of any cod who ever gobbled shell-fish,—when down the stair front of me, greasy as ice from the daily shower, came slipping and staggering, my friend Claude, armed with camp-stool and portfolio.

'Where have you been wandering to-day?' I asked. 'Have you yet been as far as the park, which, as I told you, would supply such endless subjects for your pencil?'

'Not I. I have been roaming up and down this same 'New Road' above us; and find there materials for a good week's more work, if I could afford it. Indeed, it was only to-day, for the first time, that I got as far as the lodge at the end of it, and then was glad enough to turn back shuddering at the first glimpse of the flat, dreary moorland beyond,—as Adam may have turned back into Eden after a peep out of the gates of Paradise.'

'You should have taken courage and gone a half-mile further,—to the furze-grown ruins of a great Roman camp, which gives its name to the place, 'Clovelly,' —Vallum Clausum, or Vallis Clausa, as antiquarians derive it; perhaps, 'the hidden camp,' or glen,—

perhaps something else. Who cares? The old Romans were there, at least, 10,000 strong: and some sentimental tribune or other of them had taste enough to perch his summer-house out on a conical point of the Hartland Cliffs, now tumbling into the sea, tessellated pavement, baths and all. And strange work, I doubt not, went on in that lonely nook, looking out over the Atlantic's swell,—nights and days fit for Petronius's own pen, among a seraglio of dark Celtic beauties. Perhaps it could not be otherwise. An ugly state of things—as heathen conquests always must have been; yet even in it there was a use and meaning, doubt not. But they are past, like a dream, those 10,000 stalwart men, who looked far and wide over the Damnonian moors from a station which would be, even in these days, a first-rate military position. Gone, too, are the old Saxon Franklins who succeeded. Old Wrengils, or some such name, whoever he was, at last found some one's bill too hard for his brain-pan; and there he lies on the hill above, in his 'barrow' of Wrinklebury. And gone, too, the gay Norman squire, who, as tradition says, kept his fair lady in the old watch-tower, on the highest point of the White Cliff,—'Gallantry Bower,' as they call it to this day, now a mere ring of turf-covered stones, and a few low stunted oaks, shorn by the Atlantic blasts into the shape of two huge cannon, which form a favourite landmark for the fishermen of the bay. Gone they all are, Cymry and Roman, Saxon and Norman; and upon the ruins of their accumulated labour we stand here. Each of them had his use,—planted a few more trees or cleared a few more, tilled a fresh scrap of down, organized a scrap more of chaos. Who dare wish the tide of improvement, which has been flowing for nineteen centuries, swifter and swifter

still as it goes on, to stop, just because it is not convenient to us just now to move on? It will not take another nineteen hundred years, be sure, to make even this lovely nook as superior to what it is now as it is now to the little knot of fishing-huts where naked Britons peeped out, trembling at the iron tramp of each insolent legionary from the camp above. It will not take another nineteen hundred years to develope the capabilities of this place,—to make it the finest fishery in England, next to Torbay,—the only safe harbour of refuge for West Indiamen, along sixty miles of ruthless coast,—and a commercial centre for a vast tract of half-tilled land within, which only requires means of conveyance to be as fertile and valuable as nine-tenths of England. Meanwhile you ought to have seen that deer-park, Claude. The panorama from that old ruined 'bower' of cliff and woodland, down and sea, is really unique in its way.'

'So is the whole place, in my eyes. I have seen nothing in England to be compared with this little strip of semi-tropic paradise between two great waste worlds of sea and moor. Lynmouth might be matched among the mountains of Wales and Ireland. The first three miles of the Rheidol, from the Devil's Bridge towards Aberystwith, or the gorge of the Wye, down the opposite watershed of the same mountains, from Castle Dufferin down to Rhaiadyr, are equal to it in magnificence of form and colour, and superior in size. But I question whether anything ever charmed me more than did the return to the sounds of nature which greeted me to-day, as I turned back from the dreary, silent moorland turnpike into this magnificent new road, terraced along the cliffs and woods (those who first thought of cutting it must have had souls in them above the herd), and listened to a glorious concert in

four parts, blending and supporting each other in the most exquisite harmony, from the shrill treble of a thousand birds, and the soft melancholy alto of the moaning woods, downward through the rich tenor hum of innumerable insects, that hung like sparks of fire beneath the glades of oak, to the bass of the unseen surge below,

Whose deep and dreadful organ-pipe,

far below me, contrasted strangely with the rich soft inland character of the deep woods, luxuriant ferns, and gaudy flowers. It is that very contrast which makes the place so unique. One is accustomed to connect with the notion of the sea bare cliffs, breezy downs, stunted shrubs struggling for existence: and instead of them behold a forest-wall, 500 feet high, of almost semi-tropic luxuriance. At one turn, a deep glen, with its sea of green woods, filled up at the mouth with the bright azure sheet of ocean.—Then some long stretch of the road would be banked on one side with crumbling rocks, festooned with heath, and golden hawk-weed, and London pride, like velvet cushions covered with pink lace, and beds of white bramble blossom alive with butterflies; while above my head, and on my right, the delicate cool canopy of oak and birch leaves shrouded me so close, that I could have fancied myself miles inland, buried in some glen unknown to any wind of heaven, but that everywhere between green sprays and grey stems, gleamed that same boundless ocean blue, seeming from the height at which I was to mount into the very sky. It looked but a step out of the leafy covert into blank infinity. And then, as the road wound round some point, one's eye could fall down, down, through the abyss of perpendicular wood, tree below tree clinging to and clothing the cliff, or rather no cliff, but perpendicular sheet of deep wood sedge, and

enormous crown ferns, spreading their circular fans.—But there is no describing them, or painting them either.—And then to see how the midday sunbeams leapt past one down the abyss, throwing out here a grey stem by one point of burnished silver, there a hazel branch by a single leaf of glowing golden green, shooting long bright arrows down, down, through the dim, hot, hazy atmosphere of the wood, till it rested at last upon the dappled beach of pink and grey pebbles, and the dappled surge which wandered up and down among them, and broke up into richer intricacy with its chequer-work of woodland shadows, the restless net of snowy foam.'

'You must be fresh from reading Mr. Ruskin's book, Claude, to be able to give birth to such a piece of complex magniloquence as that last period of yours.'

'Why, I saw all that, and ten thousand things more; and yet do you complain of me for having tried to put one out of all those thousand things into words? And what do you mean by sneering at Mr. Ruskin? Are there not in his books more and finer passages of descriptive poetry—word-painting—call them what you will, than in any other prose book in the English language?'

'Not a doubt of it, my dear Claude; but it will not do for every one to try Mr. Ruskin's tools. Neither you nor I possess that almost Roman severity, that stern precision of conception and expression, which enables him to revel in the most gorgeous language, without ever letting it pall upon the reader's taste by affectation or over-lusciousness. His style is like the very hills along which you have been travelling, whose woods enrich, without enervating, the grand simplicity of their forms.'

'The comparison is just,' said Claude. 'Mr. Ruskin's

style, like those very hills, and like, too, the glorious Norman cathedrals of which he is so fond, is rather magnified than concealed by the innumerable multiplicity of its ornamental chasing and colouring.'

'And is not that,' I asked, 'the very highest achievement of artistic style?'

'Doubtless. The severe and grand simplicity, of which folks talk so much, is great indeed; but only the greatest as long as men are still ignorant of Nature's art of draping her forms with colour, chiaroscuro, ornament, not at the expense of the original design, but in order to perfect it by making it appeal to every faculty instead of those of form and size alone.'

'Still you will allow the beauty of a bare rock, a down, a church spire, a sheet or line of horizontal water,—their necessity to the completion of a landscape. I recollect well having the value of a stern straight line in Nature brought home to me, when, during a long ride in the New Forest, after my eye had become quite dulled and wearied with the monotonous softness of rolling lawns, feathery heath, and rounded oak and beech woods, I suddenly caught sight of the sharp peaked roof of Rhinefield Lodge, and its row of tall stiff poplar-spires, cutting the endless sea of curves. The relief to my eye was delicious. I really believe it heightened the pleasure with which I reined in my mare for a chat with old Toomer the keeper, and the glorious bloodhound who eyed me from between his master's legs.'

'I can well believe it. Simple lines in a landscape are of the same value as the naked parts of a richly-clothed figure. They act both as contrasts, and as indications of the original substratum of the figure; but to say that severe simplicity is the highest ideal is mere pedantry and Manicheism.'

'Oh, everything is Manicheism with you, Claude!'

'And no wonder, while the world is as full of it now as it was in the thirteenth century. But let that pass. This craving after so-called classic art, whether it be Manicheism or not, is certainly a fighting against God,—a contempt of everything which He has taught us artists since the introduction of Christianity. I abominate this setting up of Sculpture above Painting, of the Greeks above the Italians,—as if all Eastern civilization, all Christian truth, had taught art nothing,—as if there was not more real beauty in a French cathedral or a Venetian palazzo than in a dozen Parthenons, and more soul in one Rafaelle, or Titian either, than in all the Greek statues of the Tribune or Vatican.'

'You have changed your creed, I see, and, like all converts, are somewhat fierce and fanatical. You used to believe in Zeuxis and Parrhasius in old times.'

'Yes, as long as I believed in Fuseli's 'Lectures;' but when I saw at Pompeii the ancient paintings which still remain to us, my faith in their powers received its first shock; and when I re-read in the Lectures of Fuseli and his school all their extravagant praises of the Greek painters, and separated their few facts fairly out from among the floods of rant on which they floated, I came to the conclusion that the ancients knew as little of colour or chiaroscuro as they did of perspective, and as little of spiritual expression as they did of landscape-painting. What do I care for the birds pecking at Zeuxis's grapes, or Zeuxis himself trying to draw back Parrhasius's curtain? Imitative art is the lowest trickery. There are twenty men in England now capable of the same sleight of hand; and yet these are recorded as the very highest triumphs of ancient art by the only men who have handed down to us any record of it.'

Said I, 'It may be so; or again, it may not. But do not fancy, Claude, that classic sculpture has finished its work on earth. You know that it has taught you what Gothic art could never teach, — the ideal of physical health and strength. Believe that it exists, and will exist, to remind the puny town-dweller of the existence of that ideal; to say to the artisan, every time he looks upon a statue—such God intended you to be; such you may be; such your class will be, in some future healthy state of civilization, when Sanitary Reform and Social Science shall be accepted and carried out as primary duties of a government toward the nation.

'No, Claude, classic sculpture remains, as a witness of the primæval paradise; a witness that man and woman were created at first healthy, and strong, and fair, and innocent; just as classic literature remains for a witness that the heathen of old were taught of God; that we have something to learn of them, summed up in that now obsolete word 'virtue'—true and wholesome manhood, which we are likely to forget, and are forgetting daily, under the enervating shadow of popular superstitions.* And till we have learnt that, may Greek books still form the basis of our liberal education, and may Greek statues, or even English attempts to copy them, fill all public halls and private houses. This generation may not understand their divine and eternal significance; but a future generation, doubt it not, will spell it out right well.'

Claude and I went forth along the cliffs of a park, which though not of the largest, is certainly of the

* Most wise and noble words upon this matter, worth the attention of all thinking men, and above all of us clergymen, have just been written by Mr. J. S. Mill, in his admirable tract on 'Liberty.'

loveliest in England,—perhaps unique, from that abrupt contact of the richest inland scenery with the open sea, which is its distinctive feature. As we wandered along the edge of the cliff, beneath us on our left lay wooded valleys, lawns spotted with deer, huge timber trees, oak and beech, birch and alder, growing as full and round-headed as if they had been buried in some Shropshire valley fifty miles inland, instead of having the Atlantic breezes all the winter long sweeping past a few hundred feet above their still seclusion. Glens of forest wound away into the high inner land, with silver burns sparkling here and there under their deep shadows; while from the lawns beneath the ground sloped rapidly upwards towards us, to stop short in a sheer wall of cliff, over which the deer were leaning to crop the shoots of ivy, where the slipping of a stone would have sent them 400 feet perpendicular into the sea. On our right, from our very feet, the sea spread out to the horizon; a single falcon was wheeling about the ledges below; a single cormorant was fishing in the breakers, diving and rising again like some tiny water-beetle;

> The murmuring surge
> That on the unnumbered pebbles idly chafed
> Could not be heard so high.

The only sound beside the rustle of the fern before the startled deer was the soft mysterious treble of the wind as it swept over the face of the cliff beneath us; but the cool air was confined to the hill-tops round; beneath, from within a short distance of the shore, the sea was shrouded in soft summer haze. The far Atlantic lay like an ocean of white wool, out of which the Hartland Cliffs and the highest point of Lundy just showed their black peaks. Here and there the western sun caught one white bank of mist after another, and tinged

them with glowing gold; while nearer us long silvery zigzag tide-lines, which I could have fancied the tracks of water-fairies, wandered away under the smoky grey-brown shadows of the fog, and seemed to vanish hundreds of miles off into an infinite void of space, so completely was all notion of size or distance destroyed by the soft gradations of the mist. Suddenly, as we stood watching, a breeze from the eastward dived into the basin of the bay, swept the clouds out, packed them together, rolled them over each other, and hurled them into the air miles high in one vast Cordillera of snowy mountains, sailing slowly out into the Atlantic; and behold, instead of the chaos of mist, the whole amphitheatre of cliffs, with their gay green woods, and spots of bright red marl and cold black iron-stone, and the gleaming white sands of Braunton, and the hills of Exmoor bathed in sunshine—so near and clear we almost fancied we could see the pink heather-hue upon them; and the bay one vast rainbow, ten miles of flame-colour and purple, emerald and ultra-marine, flecked with a thousand spots of flying snow. No one knows what gigantic effects of colour even our temperate zone can show, till they have been in Devonshire and Cornwall; and last, but not least, in Ireland—the Emerald Isle, in truth. No stay-at-home knows the colour of the sea till he has seen the West of England; and no one, either stay-at-home or traveller, I suspect, knows what the colour of a green field can be till he has seen it among the magic smiles and tears of an Irish summer shower in county Down.

Down we wandered from our height through 'trim walks and alleys green,' where the arbutus and gum-cistus fringed the cliffs, and through the deep glades of the park, towards the delicious little cove which bounds it.—A deep crack in the wooded hills, an old mill half-

buried in rocks and flowers, a stream tinkling on from one rock-basin to another towards the beach, a sandy lawn gay with sea-side flowers, over which wild boys and bare-footed girls were driving their ponies with panniers full of sand, and as they rattled back to the beach for a fresh load, standing upright on the backs of their steeds, with one foot in each pannier, at full trot over rocks and stones where a landsman would find it difficult to walk on his own legs.

Enraptured with the place and people, Claude pulled out his sketch-book and sat down.

'What extraordinary rocks!' said he, at length. 'How different from those Cyclopean blocks and walls along the Exmoor cliffs are these rich purple and olive iron-stone layers, with their sharp serrated lines and polished slabs, set up on edge, snapped, bent double, twisted into serpentine curves, every sheet of cliff scored with sharp parallel lines at some fresh fantastic angle!'

'Yes, Claude, there must have been strange work here when all these strata were being pressed and squeezed together like a ream of wet paper between the rival granite pincers of Dartmoor and Lundy. They must have suffered enough then in a few years to give them a fair right to lie quiet till Doomsday, as they seem likely to do. But I can assure you that it is only old Mother Earth who has fallen asleep hereabouts. Air and sea are just as live as ever. Ay, lovely and calm enough spreads beneath us now the broad semicircle of the bay; but to know what it can be, you should have seen it as I have done, when, in the roaring December morning, I have been galloping along the cliffs, wreck-hunting.—One morning, I can remember now well, how we watched from the Hartland Cliffs a great barque, that came drifting and rolling in before

the western gale, while we followed her up the coast, parsons and sportsmen, farmers and Preventive men, with the Manby's mortar lumbering behind us in a cart, through stone gaps and track-ways, from headland to headland.—The maddening excitement of expectation as she ran wildly towards the cliffs at our feet, and then sheered off again inexplicably;—her foremast and bowsprit, I recollect, were gone short off by the deck; a few rags of sail fluttered from her main and mizen. But with all straining of eyes and glasses, we could discern no sign of man on board. Well I recollect the mingled disappointment and admiration of the Preventive men, as a fresh set of salvors appeared in view, in the form of a boat's crew of Clovelly fishermen; how we watched breathlessly the little black speck crawling and struggling up in the teeth of the gale, under the shelter of the land, till, when the ship had rounded a point into smoother water, she seized on her like some tiny spider on a huge unwieldy fly; and then how one still smaller black speck showed aloft on the main-yard, and another—and then the desperate efforts to get the topsail set—and how we saw it tear out of their hands again, and again, and again, and almost fancied we could hear the thunder of its flappings above the roar of the gale, and the mountains of surf which made the rocks ring beneath our feet;—and how we stood silent, shuddering, expecting every moment to see whirled into the sea from the plunging yards one of those same tiny black specks, in each one of which was a living human soul, with wild women praying for it at home! And then how they tried to get her head round to the wind, and disappeared instantly in a cloud of white spray—and let her head fall back again—and jammed it round again, and disappeared again—and at last let her drive helplessly up

the bay, while we kept pace with her along the cliffs; and how at last, when she had been mastered and fairly taken in tow, and was within two miles of the pier, and all hearts were merry with the hopes of a prize which would make them rich, perhaps, for years to come—one-third, I suppose, of the whole value of her cargo—how she broke loose from them at the last moment, and rushed frantically in upon those huge rocks below us, leaping great banks of slate at the blow of each breaker, tearing off masses of iron-stone which lie there to this day to tell the tale, till she drove up high and dry against the cliff, and lay, the huge brute, like an enormous stranded whale, grinding and crashing itself to pieces against the walls of its adamantine cage. And well I recollect the sad records of the log-book that was left on board the deserted ship; how she had been water-logged for weeks and weeks, buoyed up by her timber cargo, the crew clinging in the tops, and crawling down, when they dared, for putrid biscuit-dust and drops of water, till the water was washed overboard and gone; and then notice after notice, 'On this day such an one died,' 'On this day such an one was washed away'—the log kept up to the last, even when there was only that to tell, by the stern, businesslike merchant skipper, whoever he was; and how at last, when there was neither food nor water, the strong man's heart seemed to have quailed, or, perhaps, risen, into a prayer, jotted down in the log, 'The Lord have mercy on us!'—and then a blank of several pages, and, scribbled with a famine-shaken hand, 'Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth;'—and so the log and the ship were left to the rats, which covered the deck when our men boarded her. And well I remember the last act of that tragedy; for a ship has really, as sailors feel, a personality, almost a

life and soul of her own; and as long as her timbers hold together, all is not over. You can hardly call her a corpse, though the human beings who inhabited her, and were her soul, may have fled into the far eternities; and so I felt that night, as I came down along the very woodland road on which we are now walking, with the north-west wind hurling dead branches and showers of crisp oak-leaves about my head; till suddenly, as I staggered out of the wood here, I came upon such a piece of chiaroscuro as would have baffled Correggio, or Rembrandt himself. Under that very wall was a long tent of sails and spars, filled with Preventive men, fishermen, Lloyd's under-writers, lying about in every variety of strange attitude and costume; while candles, stuck in bayonet-handles in the wall, poured out a wild glare over shaggy faces and glittering weapons, and piles of timber, and rusty iron cable that glowed red-hot in the light, and then streamed up the glen towards me through the salt misty air in long fans of light, sending fiery bars over the brown transparent oak foliage and the sad beds of withered autumn flowers, and glorifying the wild flakes of foam, as they rushed across the light-stream, into troops of tiny silver angels, that vanished into the night and hid themselves among the woods from the fierce spirit of the storm. And then, just where the glare of the lights and watch-fires was most brilliant, there too the black shadows of the cliff had placed the point of intensest darkness, lightening gradually upwards right and left, between the two great jaws of the glen, into a chaos of grey mist, where the eye could discern no form of sea or cloud, but a perpetual shifting and quivering as if the whole atmosphere was writhing with agony in the clutches of the wind.

'The ship was breaking up; and they sat by her like

hopeless physicians by a deathbed-side, to watch the last struggle,—and 'the effects of the deceased.' I recollect our literally warping ourselves down to the beach, holding on by rocks and posts. There was a saddened awe-struck silence, even upon the gentleman from Lloyd's with the pen behind his ear. A sudden turn of the clouds let in a wild gleam of moonshine upon the white leaping heads of the giant breakers, and on that tall pyramid of the Black-church Rock, which now stands in such calm grandeur gazing down on the smiling summer bay, with the white sand of Braunton and the red cliffs of Portledge shining through its two vast arches; and there, against that slab of rock on your right, still discoloured with her paint, lay the ship, rising slowly on every surge, to drop again with a piteous crash as the wave fell back from the cliff, and dragged the roaring pebbles back with it under the coming wall of foam. You have heard of ships at the last moment crying aloud like living things in agony? I heard it then, as the stumps of her masts rocked and reeled in her, and every plank and joint strained and screamed with the dreadful tension.

'A horrible image—a woman shrieking on the rack, rose up before me at those strange semi-human cries, and would not be put away—and I tried to turn, and yet my eyes were riveted on the black mass, which seemed vainly to implore the help of man against the stern ministers of the Omnipotent.

'Still she seemed to linger in the death-struggle, and I turned at last away; when, lo! a wave, huger than all before it, rushed up the boulders towards us.—We had just time to save ourselves.—A dull, thunderous groan, as if a mountain had collapsed, rose above the roar of the tempest; and we all turned with an instinctive knowledge of what had happened, just in time

to see the huge mass melt away into the boiling white, and vanish for evermore. And then the very raving of the wind seemed hushed with awe; the very breakers plunged more silently towards the shore, with something of a sullen compunction; and as we stood and strained our eyes into the gloom, one black plank after another crawled up out of the darkness upon the head of the coming surge, and threw itself at our feet like the corpse of a drowning man, too spent to struggle more.

'There is another subject for a picture for you: but your gayer fancy will prefer the scene just as you are sketching it now, as still and bright as if this coast had never seen the bay darkened with the grey columns of the water-spouts, stalking across the waves before the northern gale; and the tiny herring-boats fleeing from their nets right for the breakers, hoping more mercy even from those iron walls of rock than from the pitiless howling wilderness of spray behind them; and that merry beach beside the town covered with shrieking women and old men casting themselves on the pebbles in fruitless agonies of prayer, as corpse after corpse swept up at the feet of wife and child, till in one case alone a single dawn saw upwards of sixty widows and orphans weeping over those who had gone out the night before in the fulness of strength and courage. Hardly an old playmate of mine, Claude, but is drowned and gone:—

> Their graves are scattered far and wide
> By mount, by stream, and sea.

'One poor little fellow's face starts out of the depths of memory as fresh as ever, my especial pet and bird-nesting companion as a boy—a little delicate, precocious, large-brained child, that might have written books some day, if he had been a gentleman's son; but when

his father's ship was wrecked they found him, left alone of all the crew, just as he had been lashed into the rigging by loving and dying hands, but cold and stiff, the little soul beaten out of him by the cruel waves before it had time to show what growth there might have been in it. We will talk no more of such things. It is thankless to be sad when all heaven and earth are keeping holiday under the smile of God.

'And now let us return. At four o'clock to-morrow morning, you know, we are to start for Lundy.'

VI.—Lundy.

It was four o'clock on an August morning. Our little party had made the sleeping streets ring with jests and greetings, as it collected on the pier. Some dozen young men and women, sons and daughters of the wealthier coasting captains and owners of fishing-smacks, chaperoned by our old landlord, whose delicate and gentlemanlike features and figure were strangely at variance with the history of his life,—daring smuggler, daring man-of-war sailor, and then most daring and successful of coast-guard men. After years of fighting and shipwreck and creeping for kegs of brandy; after having seen, too—sight not to be forgotten—the Walcheren dykes and the Walcheren fever, through weary months of pestilence, he had come back with a little fortune of prize-money to be a village oracle, loving and beloved, as gentle and courteous as if he had never 'stato al inferno,' and looked Death in the face. Heaven bless thee, shrewd loyal heart, a gentleman of God's making, not unrecognised either by many of men's making. The other chaperone was a lady of God's making too; one who might have been a St. Theresa, had she been born there and then; but as it was, had been fated to become only the Wesleyan abbess of the town, and,

like Deborah, 'a mother in Israel.' With her tall, slim, queenly figure, massive forehead, wild glittering eyes, features beaming with tenderness and enthusiasm, and yet overcast with a peculiar expression of self-consciousness and restraint, well known to those who have studied the physiognomies of 'saints,' she seemed to want only the dress of some monastic order to make her the ideal of a mediæval abbess, watching with a half-pitying, half-complacent smile, the gambols of a group of innocent young worldlings. I saw Claude gazing at her full of admiration and surprise, which latter was certainly not decreased when, as soon as all had settled themselves comfortably on board, and the cutter was slipping quietly away under the magnificent deer-park cliffs, the Lady Abbess, pulling out her Wesleyan hymn-book, gave out the Morning Hymn, apparently as a matter of course.

With hardly a demur one sweet voice after another arose; then a man gained courage, and chimed in with a full harmonious bass; then a rich sad alto made itself heard, as it wandered in and out between the voices of the men and women. And at last a wild mellow tenor, which we discovered after much searching to proceed from the most unlikely-looking lips of an old dry, weather-bleared, mummified chrysalis of a man, who stood aft, steering with his legs, and showing no sign of life except when he slowly and solemnly filled his nose with snuff.

'What strange people have you brought me among?' asked Claude. 'I have been wondering ever since I came here at the splendid faces and figures of men, women, and children, which popped out upon me from every door in that human rabbit-burrow above. I have been in raptures at the gracefulness, the courtesy, the intelligence of almost every one I meet; and now,

to crown all, every one among them seems to be a musician.'

'Really you are not far wrong, and you will find them as remarkable morally as they are physically and intellectually. The simplicity and purity of the women here put one more in mind of the valleys of the Tyrol than of an English village.'

'And in proportion to their purity, I suppose,' said Claude, 'is their freedom and affectionateness?'

'Exactly. It would do your 'naturalist' heart good, Claude, to see a young fellow just landed from a foreign voyage rolling up the street which we have just descended, and availing himself of the immemorial right belonging to such cases of kissing and being kissed by every woman whom he meets, young and old. You will find yourself here among those who are too simple-minded, and too full of self-respect, to be either servile or uncourteous.'

'I have found out already that Liberty, Fraternity, and Equality, in such company as this, are infinitely pleasanter, as well as cheaper, than the aristocratic seclusion of a cutter hired for our own behoof.'

'True; and now you will not go home and, as most tourists do, say that you know a place, without knowing the people who live in it—as if the human inhabitants of a range of scenery were not among its integral and most important parts'——.

'What! are Copley Fielding's South Down landscapes incomplete without a half-starved seven shillings a-week labourer in the foreground?'

'Honestly, are they not a text without a sermon? a premise without a conclusion? Is it not partly because the land is down, and not well-tilled arable, that the labourer is what he is? And yet, perhaps, the very absence of human beings in his vast sheets of

landscape, when one considers that they are scraps of great, overcrowded, scientific England in the nineteenth century, is in itself the bitterest of satires. But, hush! there is another hymn commencing—not to be the last by many.'

* * * * *

We had landed, and laughed, and scrambled, eaten and drank, seen all the sights of Lundy, and heard all the traditions. Are they not written in Mr. Bamfield's Ilfracombe guide? Why has not some one already written a fire-and-brimstone romance about them? 'Moresco Castle; or, the Pirate Knight of the Atlantic Wave.' What a title! Or again—'The Seal Fiend; or, the Nemesis of the Scuttled West Indiaman.'—If I had paper and lubricité enough—that delightful carelessness of any moral or purpose, except that of writing fine and turning pennies, which possess our modern scribblers—I could tales unfold —— But neither pirate legends, nor tales of cheated insurance offices, nor wrecks and murders, will make us understand Lundy—what it is 'considered in its idea,' as the new argot is. It may be defined as a lighthouse-bearing island. The whole three miles of granite table-land, seals, sea-birds, and human beings, are mere accidents and appendages—the pedestal and the ornaments of that great white tower in the centre, whose sleepless fiery eye blinks all night long over the night-mists of the Atlantic. If, as a wise man has said, the days will come when our degenerate posterity will fall down and worship rusty locomotives and fossil electric-telegraphs, the relics of their ancestors' science, grown to them mythic and impossible, as the Easter-islanders bow before the colossal statues left by a nobler and extinct race, then surely there will be pilgrimages to Lundy, and prayers to that white granite tower, with its unglazed lantern

and rusting machinery, to light itself up again, and help poor human beings! Really, my dear brothers, I am not in jest: you seem but too likely now-a-days to arrive at some such catastrophe—Emersonian sentimental philosophy for the 'enlightened' few, and fetish-worship (of which nominally Christian forms are as possible as heathen ones) for the masses.—At that you may only too probably arrive—unless you repent, and 'get back your souls.'

* * * * *

We had shot along the cliffs a red-legged chough or two, and one of the real black English rat, exterminated on the mainland by the grey Hanoverian new-comer, and weary with sight-seeing and scrambling, we sat down to meditate on a slab of granite, which hung three hundred feet in air above the western main.

'This is even more strange and new to me,' said Claude, at length, 'than anything I have yet seen in this lovely west. I now appreciate Ruskin's advice to oil-painters to go and study the coasts of Devon and Cornwall, instead of lingering about the muddy seas and tame cliffs of the Channel and the German Ocean.'

'How clear and brilliant,' said I, 'everything shows through this Atlantic atmosphere. The intensity of colouring may vie with that of the shores of the Mediterranean. The very raininess of the climate, by condensing the moisture into an ever-changing phantasmagoria of clouds, leaves the clear air and sunshine, when we do get a glimpse of them, all the more pure and transparent.'

'The distinctive feature of the scene is, in my eyes, the daring juxtaposition of large simple masses of positive colour. There are none of the misty enamelled tones of Lynmouth, or the luscious richness of Clovelly. The forms are so simple and severe, that they would

be absolutely meagre, were it not for the gorgeous colouring with which nature has so lovingly made up for the absence of all softness, all picturesque outline. One does not regret or even feel the want of trees here, while the eye ranges down from that dappled cloud-world above, over that vast sheet of purple heather, those dells bedded with dark velvet green fern, of a depth and richness of hue which I never saw before—over these bright grey granite rocks, spangled with black glittering mica and golden lichens, to rest at last on that sea below, which streams past the island in a swift roaring torrent of tide.'

'Sea, Claude? say, ocean. This is real Atlantic blue here beneath us. No more Severn mud, no more glass-green bay-water, but real ocean sapphire—dark, deep, intense, Homeric purple, it spreads away, away, there before us, without a break or islet, to the shores of America. You are sitting on one of the last points of Europe; and therefore all things round you are stern and strange with a barbaric pomp, such as befits the boundary of a world.'

'Ay, the very form of the cliffs shows them to be the breakwaters of a continent. No more fantastic curves and bands of slate, such as harmonize so well with the fairyland which we left this morning; the cliffs, with their horizontal rows of cubical blocks, seem built up by Cyclopean hands.'

'Yet how symbolic is the difference between them and that equally Cyclopic masonry of the Exmoor coast. There every fracture is fresh, sharp-edged, crystalline; the worn-out useless hills are dropping to pieces with their own weight. Here each cube is delicately rounded off at the edges, every crack worn out into a sinuous furrow, like the scars of an everlasting warfare with the winds and waves.'

'Does it not raise strange longings in you,' said Claude, 'to gaze out yonder over the infinite calm, and then to remember that beyond it lies America!—the new world; the future world; the great Titan-baby, who will be teeming with new Athens and Londons, with new Bacons and Shakspeares, Newtons and Goethes, when this old worn-out island will be—what? Oh! when I look out here, like a bird from its cage, a captive from his dungeon, and remember what lies behind me, to what I must return to-morrow—the over-peopled Babylon of misery and misrule, puffery and covetousness—and there before me great countries untilled, uncivilized, unchristianized, crying aloud for man to come and be man indeed, and replenish the earth and subdue it. 'Oh, that I had wings as a dove, then would I flee away and be at rest!' Here, lead me away; my body is growing as dizzy as my mind. I feel coming over me that horrible longing of which I have heard, to leap out into empty space. How the blank air whispers, 'Be free!' How the broad sea smiles, and calls, with its ten thousand waves, 'Be free!'—As I live, if you do not take me away I shall throw myself over the cliff.'

I did take him away, for I knew the sensation and its danger well. It has nothing to do with physical giddiness. Those who are cliff-bred, and who never were giddy for an instant in their lives, have often felt themselves impelled to leap from masts, and tree-tops, and cliffs; and nothing but the most violent effort of will could break the fascination. I cannot but think, by the bye, that many a puzzling suicide might be traced to this same emotion acting on a weak and morbid brain.

We returned to the little landing cove. The red-sailed cutter lay sleeping below us—'floating double, ship and shadow.' Shoals of innumerable mackerel

broke up, making acres of water foam and sparkle round their silvery sides, with a soft roar (call it 'a bull' if you like, it is the only expression for that mysterious sound), while among them the black head of a huge seal was slowly and silently appearing and vanishing, as he got his dinner, in a quiet businesslike way, among the unhappy wanderers.

We put off in the boat, and just halfway from the cutter Claude gave a start, and the women a scream, as the enormous brute quietly raised his head and shoulders out of the water ten yards off, with a fish kicking in his mouth, and the water running off his nose, to take a deliberate stare at us, after the fashion of seals, whose ruling passion is curiosity. The sound of a musical instrument, the sight of a man bathing—anything, in short, which their small wits cannot explain at first sight, is enough to make them forget all their cunning, and thrust their heads suicidally into any danger; and even so it fared with the 'black man,' as the girls, in their first terror, declared him to be. Some fellow's gun went off—of itself I should like to believe—but the whole charge disappeared into his sleek round visage, knocking the mackerel from between his teeth; and he turned over, a seven-foot lump of lifeless blubber.

'Wretch!' cried Claude, as we dragged the seal into the boat, where he lay with his head and arms hanging helplessly over the bows, like a sea-sick alderman on board a Margate steamer. 'What excuse can he give for such a piece of wanton cruelty?'

'I assure you his skin and oil are very valuable.'

'Pish!—Was he thinking of skin and oil when he pulled the trigger? or merely obeying the fleshly lust of destructiveness—the puppet of two bumps on the back of his head?'

'My dear Claude, man is the microcosm, and as the highest animal, the ideal type of the mammalia, he, like all true types, comprises in himself the attributes of all lower species. Therefore he must have a tiger-vein in him, my dear Claude, as well as a beaver-vein and a spider-vein; and no more shame to him. You are a butterfly; that good fellow a beast of prey; both may have their own work to do in this age just as they had in the old ones; and if you do not like that explanation, all I can say is, I can sympathize with you and with him too. Homo sum—nil humani a me alienum puto. Trim the boat, lads, or the seal will swamp us, and, like Samson, slay more in his death than ever he slew in his life.'

We slipped on homeward. The cliff-wall of Lundy stood out blacker and blacker every moment against the gay western sky; greens, greys, and purples, dyeing together into one deep rich monotone, for which our narrow colour-vocabulary has no word; and threw a long cold shadow toward us across the golden sea; suddenly above its dark ridge a wild wreath of low rack caught the rays of the setting sun, and flamed up like a volcano towards the dun and purple canopy of upper clouds. Before us the blue sea and the blue land-line were fading into mournful grey, on which one huge West Indiaman blazed out, orange and scarlet, her crowded canvas all a-flame from the truck to the water's edge.—A few moments and she, too, had vanished into the grey twilight, and a chill night-wind crisped the sea. It was a relief to hear the Evening Hymn rise rich and full from one voice, and then another and another, till the men chimed in one by one, and the whole cutter, from stem to stern, breathed up its melody into the silent night.

But the hymn soon flagged—there was more mirth

on board than could vent itself in old Charles Wesley's words; and one began to hum a song tune, and then another, with a side glance at the expression of the Lady Abbess's face, till at last, when a fair wife took courage, and burst out with full pipe into 'The sea, the sea,' the ice was fairly broken; and among jests and laughter one merry harmless song after another rang out, many of them, to Claude's surprise, fashionable London ones, which sounded strangely enough out there on the wild western sea. At last—

'Claude, friend,' I whispered, 'you must sing your share too—and mine also, for that matter.'

'What shall I sing?'

'Anything you will, from the sublime to the ridiculous. They will understand and appreciate it as well as yourself. Recollect, you are not among bullet-headed South Saxon clods, but among wits as keen and imaginations as rich as those of any Scotch shepherd or Manchester operative.'

And up rose his exquisite tenor.

This was his first song, but it was not allowed to be his last. German ballads, Italian Opera airs, were all just as warmly, and perhaps far more sincerely appreciated, as they would have been by any London evening-party; and the singing went on, hour after hour, as we slipped slowly on upon the tide, till it grew late, and the sweet voices died away one by one; and then the Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity which had reigned so pleasantly throughout the day took a new form, as the women huddled together to sleep in each other's arms; and the men and we clustered forwards, while from every mouth fragrant incense steamed upwards into the air. 'Man a cooking animal?' my dear Doctor Johnson—pooh! man is a smoking animal. There is his ergon, his 'differential energy,' as the

Aristotelians say—his true distinction from the ourang-outang. Ponder it well.

The men were leaning on the trawl capstan, while our old landlord, with half-a-dozen pipes within a foot of his face, droned out some long sea-yarn about Ostend, and muds, and snow-storms, and revenue-cruisers going down stern foremost, kegs of brandy and French prisons, which I shall not repeat; for indeed the public has been surfeited with sea-stories of late, from many sufficiently dull ones up to the genial wisdom of 'Peter Simple,' and the gorgeous word-painting of 'Tom Cringle's Log.' And now the subject is stale—the old war and the wonders thereof have died away into the past, like the men who fought in it; and Trafalgar and the Bellerophon are replaced by Manchester and 'Mary Barton.' We have solved the old sea-going problems pretty well—thanks to wise English-hearted Captain Marryat, now gone to his rest, just when his work was done; and we must turn round and face a few land-going problems not quite so easy of solution. So Claude and I thought, as we leant over the sloop's bows, listening neither to the Ostend story forwards nor the forty-stanza ballad aft, which the old steersman was moaning on, careless of listeners, to keep himself awake at the helm. Forty stanzas or so we did count from curiosity; the first line of each of which ended infallibly with

Says the commodo—ore;

and the third with

Says the female smuggler;

and then gave up in despair; and watched in a dreamy, tired, half-sad mood, the everlasting sparkle of the water as our bows threw it gently off in sheets of flame and 'tender curving lines of creamy' fire, that ran

along the glassy surface, and seemed to awaken the sea for yards round into glittering life, as countless diamonds, and emeralds, and topazes, leaped and ran and dived round us, while we slipped slowly by; and then a speck of light would show far off in the blank darkness, and another, and another, and slide slowly up to us—shoals of medusæ, every one of them a heaving globe of flame; and some unseen guillemot would give a startled squeak, or a shearwater close above our heads suddenly stopped the yarn, and raised a titter among the men, by announcing in most articulate English his intention of invading the domestic happiness of his neighbour; and then a fox's bark from the cliffs came wild and shrill, although so faint and distant; or the lazy gaff gave a sad uneasy creak; and then a soft warm air, laden with heather honey, and fragrant odours of sedge, and birch, and oak, came sighing from the land; while all around us was the dense blank blackness of the night, except where now and then some lonely gleam through the southern clouds showed the huge cliff tops on our right.—It was all most unearthly, dream-like, a strange phantasmagoria, like some scene from 'The Ancient Mariner'—all the world shut out, silent, invisible, and we floating along there alone, like a fairy ship creeping through Chaos and the unknown Limbo. Was it an evil thought that rose within me as I said to Claude—

'Is not this too like life? Our only light the sparkles that rise up round us at every step, and die behind us; and all around, and all before, the great black unfathomable eternities? A few souls brought together as it were by chance, for a short friendship and mutual dependence in this little ship of earth, so soon to land her passengers and break up the company for ever?'

He laughed.

'There is a devil's meaning to everything in nature, and a God's meaning, too. Your friends, the zoologists, have surely taught you better than that. As I read Nature's parable to-night, I find nothing in it but hope. What if there be darkness, the sun will rise to-morrow. What if there seem a chaos, the great organic world is still living, and growing, and feeding, unseen by us, all the black night through; and every phosphoric atom there below is a sign that even in the darkest night there is still the power of light, ready to flash out, wherever and however it is stirred. Does the age seem to you dark? Do you, too, feel as I do at times, the awful sadness of that text,—'The time shall come when ye shall desire to see one of the days of the Lord, and shall not see it?' Then remember that

> The night is never so long
> But at last it ringeth for matin song.

And even as it is around us here, so it is in the world of men; the night is peopled not merely with phantoms and wizards, superstitions and spirits of evil, but under its shadow all sciences, methods, social energies, are taking rest, and growing, and feeding, unknown to themselves, that they may awake into a new life, and intermarry, and beget children nobler than themselves, when 'the day-spring from on high comes down.' Even now, see! the dawn is gilding the highest souls, as it is those Exmoor peaks afar; and we are in the night, only because we crawl below. What if we be unconscious of all the living energies which are fermenting round us now? Have you not shown me in this last week every moorland pool, every drop of the summer sea, alive with beautiful organizations, multiplying as fast as the thoughts of man? Is not every leaf breathing

still? every sap vein drinking still, though we may not see them? 'Even so is the kingdom of God; like seed sown in the ground; and men rise, and lie down and sleep; and it groweth up they know not how.'

We both fell into a reverie. The story and the ballad were finished, and not a sound broke the silence, except the screaming of the sea fowl, which led my thoughts wandering back to nights long past, when we dragged the seine up to our chins in water through the short midsummer night, and scrambled and rolled over on the beach in boyish glee, after the skate and mullet, with those now gone; and as I thought and thought, old voices seemed to call to me, old faces looked at me, of playmates, and those nearer than playmates, now sleeping in the deep deep sea, amid far coral islands; and old figures seemed to glide out of the mysterious dark along the still sea floor, as if the ocean were indeed giving up her dead. I shook myself, turned away, and tried to persuade myself that I was dreaming. Perhaps I had been doing so. At least, I remember very little more, till I was roused by the rattling of the chain-cable through the hawse-hole, opposite the pier-head.

And now, gentle readers, farewell; and farewell, Clovelly, and all the loving hearts it holds; and farewell, too, the soft still summer weather. Claude and I are taking our last walk together along the deer-park cliffs. Lundy is shrouded in the great grey fan of dappled haze which streams up from the westward, dimming the sickly sun. 'There is not a breath the blue wave to curl.' Yet, lo! round Chapman's Head creeps a huge bank of polished swell, and bursts in thunder on the cliffs.—Another follows, and another.—The Atlantic gales are sending in their avant-couriers of ground-swell: six hours more, and the

storm which has been sweeping over 'the still-vexed Bermoöthes,' and bending the tall palms on West Indian isles, will be roaring through the oak-woods of Devon. The old black buck is calling his does with ominous croakings, and leading the way slowly into the deepest coverts of the glens. The stormy petrels, driven in from the Atlantic, are skimming like great black swallows over the bay beneath us. Long strings of sea-fowl are flagging on steadily at railroad pace, towards the sands and salt-marshes of Braunton. The herring-boats are hastily hauling their nets—you may see the fish sparkling like flakes of silver as they come up over the gunwale; all craft, large and small, are making for the shelter of the pier. Claude starts this afternoon to sit for six months in Babylonic smoke, working up his sketches into certain unspeakable pictures, with which the world will be astonished, or otherwise, at the next Royal Academy Exhibition; while I, for whom another fortnight of pure western air remains, am off to well-known streams, to be in time for the autumn floods, and the shoals of fresh-run salmon-trout.

SPEECH IN BEHALF OF THE LADIES' SANITARY ASSOCIATION, 1859.

LET me begin by asking the ladies who are interesting themselves in this good work, whether they have really considered what they are about to do in carrying out their own plans? Are they aware that if their Society really succeeds, they will produce a very serious, some would think a very dangerous, change in the state of this nation? Are they aware that they would probably save the lives of some thirty or forty per cent. of the children who are born in England, and that therefore they would cause the subjects of Queen Victoria to increase at a very far more rapid rate than they do now? And are they aware that some very wise men inform us that England is already over-peopled, and that it is an exceedingly puzzling question where we shall soon be able to find work or food for our masses, so rapidly do they increase already, in spite of the thirty or forty per cent. which kind Nature carries off yearly before they are five years old? Have they considered what they are to do with all those children whom they are going to save alive? That has to be thought of; and if they really do believe, with some political economists, that over-population is a possibility to a country which has the greatest colonial empire that the world has ever seen, then I think they had better stop in their course; and let the children die, as they have been in the habit of dying.

But if, on the other hand, it seems to them, as I confess it does to me, that the most precious thing in the world is a human being: that the lowest, and poorest, and the most degraded of human beings is better than all the dumb animals in the world: that there is an infinite, priceless capability in that creature, fallen as it may be; a capability of virtue, and of social and industrial use, which, if it is taken in time, may be developed up to a pitch, of which at first sight the child gives no hint whatsoever: if they believe again, that of all races upon earth now, the English race is probably the finest, and that it gives not the slightest sign whatever of exhaustion; that it seems to be on the whole a young race, and to have very great capabilities in it which have not yet been developed, and above all, the most marvellous capability of adapting itself to every sort of climate and every form of life, which any race, except the old Roman, ever has had in the world: if they consider with me that it is worth the while of political economists and social philosophers to look at the map, and see that about four-fifths of the globe cannot be said as yet to be in anywise inhabited or cultivated, or in the state into which men could put it by a fair supply of population, and industry, and human intellect: then, perhaps, they may think with me that it is a duty, one of the noblest of duties, to help the increase of the English race as much as possible, and to see that every child that is born into this great nation of England be developed to the highest pitch to which we can develop him in physical strength and in beauty, as well as in intellect and in virtue. And then, in that light, it does seem to me, that this Institution—small now, but I do hope some day to become great, and to become the mother institution of many and valuable children—

is one of the noblest, most right-minded, straightforward, and practical conceptions that I have come across for some years.

We all know the difficulties of sanitary legislation. One looks at them at times almost with despair. I have my own reasons, with which I will not trouble this meeting, for looking on them with more despair than ever: not on account of the government of the time, or any possible government that could come to England, but on account of the peculiar class of persons in whom the ownership of the small houses has become more and more vested, and who are becoming more and more, I had almost said, the arbiters of the popular opinion, and of every election of parliament. However, that is no business of ours here; that must be settled somewhere else; and a fearfully long time, it seems to me, it will be before it is settled. But, in the mean time, what legislation cannot do, I believe private help, and, above all, woman's help, can do even better. It can do this; it can improve the condition of the working man: and not only of him; I must speak also of the middle classes, of the men who own the house in which the working man lives. I must speak, too, of the wealthy tradesman; I must speak—it is a sad thing to have to say it—of our own class as well as of others. Sanitary reform, as it is called, or, in plain English, the art of health, is so very recent a discovery, as all true physical science is, that we ourselves and our own class know very little about it, and practise it very little. And this society, I do hope, will bear in mind that it is not simply to seek the working man, not only to go into the foul alley; but it is to go to the door of the farmer, to the door of the shopkeeper, aye, to the door of ladies and gentlemen of the same rank as ourselves. Women can do

in that work what men cannot do. The private correspondence, private conversation, private example, of ladies, above all of married women, of mothers of families, may do what no legislation can do. I am struck more and more with the amount of disease and death I see around me in all classes, which no sanitary legislation whatsoever could touch, unless you had a complete house-to-house visitation by some government officer, with powers to enter every dwelling, to drain it, and ventilate it; and not only that, but to regulate the clothes and the diet of every inhabitant, and that among all ranks. I can conceive of nothing short of that, which would be absurd and impossible, and would also be most harmful morally, which would stop the present amount of disease and death which I see around me, without some such private exertion on the part of women, above all of mothers, as I do hope will spring from this institution more and more.

I see this, that three persons out of every four are utterly unaware of the general causes of their own ill health, and of the ill health of their children. They talk of their 'afflictions,' and their 'misfortunes;' and, if they be pious people, they talk of 'the will of God,' and of 'the visitation of God.' I do not like to trench upon those matters here: but when I read in my book and in your book 'that it is not the will of our Father in Heaven that one of these little ones should perish,' it has come to my mind sometimes with very great strength that that may have a physical application as well as a spiritual one; and that the Father in Heaven who does not wish the child's soul to die, may possibly have created that child's body for the purpose of its not dying except in a good old age. For not only in the lower class, but in the middle and upper classes, when one sees an unhealthy family, then in three

cases out of four, if one will take time, trouble, and care enough, one can, with the help of the doctor who has been attending them, run the evil home to a very different cause than the will of God; and that is, to stupid neglect, stupid ignorance, or what is just as bad, stupid indulgence.

Now, I do believe that if those tracts which you are publishing, which I have read, and of which I cannot speak too highly, are spread over the length and breadth of the land, and if women—clergymen's wives, the wives of manufacturers and of great employers, district visitors and school mistresses, have these books put into their hands, and are persuaded to spread them, and to enforce them, by their own example and by their own counsel,—that then, in the course of a few years, this system being thoroughly carried out, you would see a sensible and large increase in the rate of population. When you have saved your children alive, then you must settle what to do with them. But a living dog is better than a dead lion; I would rather have the living child, and let it take its chance, than let it return to God—wasted. O! it is a distressing thing to see children die: God gives the most beautiful and precious thing that earth can have, and we just take it and cast it away; we toss our pearls upon the dunghill, and leave them. A dying child is to me one of the most dreadful sights in the world. A dying man, a man dying on the field of battle?—That is a small sight: he has taken his chance; he is doing his duty; he has had his excitement; he has had his glory, if that will be any consolation to him; if he is a wise man, he has the feeling that he is dying for his country and his queen: and that is, and ought to be, enough for him. I am not horrified or shocked at the sight of the man who dies on the field of battle: let him die so.

It does not horrify or shock me, again, to see a man dying in a good old age, even though the last struggle be painful, as it too often is. But it does shock me, it does make me feel that the world is indeed out of joint, to see a child die. I believe it to be a priceless boon to the child to have lived for a week, or a day: but oh, what has God given to this thankless earth, and what has the earth thrown away; and in nine cases out of ten, from its own neglect and carelessness! What that boy might have been, what he might have done as an Englishman, if he could have lived and grown up healthy and strong! And I entreat you to bear this in mind, that it is not as if our lower or our middle classes were not worth saving; bear in mind that the physical beauty, strength, intellectual power of the middle classes, — the shopkeeping class, the farming class, down to the lowest working class,—whenever you give them a fair chance, whenever you give them fair food and air, and physical education of any kind, prove them to be the finest race in Europe. Not merely the aristocracy, splendid race as they are, but down and down and down to the lowest labouring man, to the navigator;—why there is not such a body of men in Europe as our navigators; and no body of men perhaps have had a worse chance of growing to be what they are; and yet see what they have done! See the magnificent men they become, in spite of all that is against them, dragging them down, tending to give them rickets and consumption, and all the miserable diseases which children contract; see what men they are, and then conceive what they might be! It has been said, again and again, that there are no more beautiful race of women in Europe than the wives and daughters of our London shopkeepers: and yet there are few races of people who lead a life more in oppo-

sition to all rules of hygiene. But, in spite of all that, so wonderful is the vitality of the English race, they are what they are; and therefore we have the finest material to work upon that people ever had. And therefore, again, we have the less excuse if we do allow English people to grow up puny, stunted, and diseased.

Let me refer again to that word that I used: death —the amount of death. I really believe there are hundreds of good and kind people who would take up this subject with their whole heart and soul if they were aware of the magnitude of the evil. Lord Shaftesbury told you just now that there were one hundred thousand preventable deaths in England every year. So it is. We talk of the loss of human life in war. We are the fools of smoke and noise; because there are cannon-balls, forsooth, and swords and red coats; and because it costs a great deal of money, and makes a great deal of talk in the papers, we think—What so terrible as war? I will tell you what is ten times, and ten thousand times, more terrible than war, and that is —outraged Nature. War, we are discovering now, is the clumsiest and most expensive of all games; we are finding that if you wish to commit an act of cruelty and folly, the most costly one that you can commit is to contrive to shoot your fellow-men in war. So it is; and thank God that so it is: but Nature, insidious, inexpensive, silent, sends no roar of cannon, no glitter of arms to do her work; she gives no warning note of preparation; she has no protocols, nor any diplomatic advances, whereby she warns her enemy that war is coming. Silently, I say, and insidiously she goes forth: no! she does not even go forth; she does not step out of her path: but quietly, by the very same means by which she makes alive, she puts to death; and so avenges herself of those who have rebelled against her.

By the very same laws by which every blade of grass grows, and every insect springs to life in the sunbeam, she kills and kills and kills, and is never tired of killing; till she has taught man the terrible lesson he is so slow to learn, that Nature is only conquered by obeying her.

And bear in mind one thing more. Man has his courtesies of war, and his chivalries of war: he does not strike the unarmed man; he spares the woman and the child. But Nature is as fierce when she is offended, as she is bounteous and kind when she is obeyed. She spares neither woman nor child. She has no pity; for some awful, but most good reason, she is not allowed to have any pity. Silently she strikes the sleeping babe, with as little remorse as she would strike the strong man, with the spade or the musket in his hand. Ah! would to God that some man had the pictorial eloquence to put before the mothers of England the mass of preventable suffering, the mass of preventable agony of mind and body, which exists in England year after year! and would that some man had the logical eloquence to make them understand that it is in their power, in the power of the mothers and wives of the higher class, I will not say to stop it all,—God only knows that,—but to stop, as I believe, three-fourths of it.

It is in the power, I believe, of any woman in this room to save three or four lives—human lives—during the next six months. It is in your power, ladies; and it is so easy. You might save several lives a piece, if you chose, without, I believe, interfering with your daily business, or with your daily pleasure; or, if you choose, with your daily frivolities, in any way whatsoever. Let me ask, then, those who are here, and who have not yet laid these things to heart: Will you let this meeting to-day be a mere passing matter of two or

three hours' interest, which you may go away and forget for the next book or the next amusement? Or will you be in earnest? Will you learn—I say it openly—from the noble chairman, how easy it is to be in earnest in life; how every one of you, amid all the artificial complications of English society in the nineteenth century, can find a work to do, a noble work to do, a chivalrous work to do,—just as chivalrous as if you lived in any old magic land, such as Spenser talked of in his Faery Queene; how you can be as true a knight-errant or lady-errant in the present century, as if you had lived far away in the dark ages of violence and rapine? Will you, I ask, learn this? Will you learn to be in earnest; and to use the position, and the station, and the talent that God has given you to save alive those who should live? And will you remember that it is not the will of your Father that is in Heaven that one little one that plays in the kennel outside should perish, either in body or in soul?

GREAT CITIES, AND THEIR INFLUENCE FOR GOOD AND EVIL.*

THE pleasure, gentlemen and ladies, of addressing you here is mixed in my mind with very solemn feelings; the honour which you have done me is tempered by humiliating thoughts.

For it was in this very city of Bristol, twenty-seven years ago, that I received my first lesson in what is now called Social Science; and yet, alas! more than ten years elapsed ere I could even spell out that lesson, though it had been written for me (as well as for all England) in letters of flame, from the one end of heaven to the other.

I was a school-boy in Clifton up above. I had been hearing of political disturbances, even of riots, of which I understood nothing, and for which I cared nothing. But on one memorable Sunday afternoon I saw an object which was distinctly not political. Otherwise I should have no right to speak of it here.

It was an afternoon of sullen autumn rain. The fog hung thick over the docks and lowlands. Glaring through that fog I saw a bright mass of flame—almost like a half-risen sun.

That, I was told, was the gate of the new gaol on fire. That the prisoners in it had been set free; that—— But why speak of what too many here recollect but too well? The fog rolled slowly upward.

* Lecture delivered at Bristol, October 5, 1857.

Dark figures, even at that great distance, were flitting to and fro across what seemed the mouth of the pit. The flame increased—multiplied—at one point after another; till by ten o'clock that night I seemed to be looking down upon Dante's Inferno, and to hear the multitudinous moan and wail of the lost spirits surging to and fro amid that sea of fire.

Right behind Brandon Hill—how can I ever forget it?—rose the great central mass of fire; till the little mound seemed converted into a volcano, from the peak of which the flame streamed up, not red alone, but delicately green and blue, pale rose and pearly white, while crimson sparks leapt and fell again in the midst of that rainbow, not of hope, but of despair; and dull explosions down below mingled with the roar of the mob, and the infernal hiss and crackle of the flame.

Higher and higher the fog was scorched and shrivelled upward by the fierce heat below, glowing through and through with red reflected glare, till it arched itself into one vast dome of red-hot iron, fit roof for all the madness down below—and beneath it, miles away, I could see the lonely tower of Dundie shining red;—the symbol of the old faith, looking down in stately wonder and sorrow upon the fearful birth-throes of a new age. Yes.—Why did I say just now, despair? I was wrong. Birth-throes, and not death-pangs, those horrors were. Else they would have no place in my discourse; no place, indeed, in my mind. Why talk over the signs of disease, decay, death? Let the dead bury their dead: and let us follow Him who dieth not; by whose command

> The old order changeth, giving place to the new,
> And God fulfils himself in many ways.

If we will believe this,—if we will look on each convulsion of society, however terrible for the time

being, as a token, not of decrepitude, but of youth; not as the expiring convulsions of sinking humanity, but as upward struggles, upward toward fuller light, freer air, a juster, simpler, and more active life;—then we shall be able to look calmly, however sadly, on the most appalling tragedies of humanity—even on these late Indian ones—and take our share, faithful and hopeful, in supplying the new and deeper wants of a new and nobler time.

But to return. It was on the Tuesday or Wednesday after, if I recollect right, that I saw another, and a still more awful sight. Along the north side of Queen-square, in front of ruins which had been three days before noble buildings, lay a ghastly row, not of corpses, but of corpse-fragments. I have no more wish than you to dilate upon that sight. But there was one charred fragment—with a scrap of old red petticoat adhering to it, which I never forgot—which I trust in God that I never shall forget. It is good for a man to be brought once at least in his life face to face with fact, ultimate fact, however horrible it may be; and have to confess to himself, shuddering, what things are possible upon God's earth, when man has forgotten that his only welfare lies in living after the likeness of God.

Not that I learnt the lesson then. When the first excitement of horror and wonder were past, what I had seen made me for years the veriest aristocrat, full of hatred and contempt of these dangerous classes, whose existence I had for the first time discovered. It required many years—years, too, of personal intercourse with the poor, to explain to me the true meaning of what I saw here in October twenty-seven years ago: and to learn a part of that lesson which God taught to others thereby. And one part at least of that lesson

was this—That the social state of a city depends directly on its moral state, and—I fear dissenting voices, but I must say what I believe to be truth—that the moral state of a city depends—how far I know not, but frightfully, to an extent as yet uncalculated, and perhaps incalculable—on the physical state of that city; on the food, water, air, and lodging of its inhabitants.

But that lesson, and others connected with it, was learnt, and learnt well, by hundreds. From the sad catastrophe I date the rise of that interest in Social Science; that desire for some nobler, more methodic, more permanent benevolence than that which stops at mere almsgiving and charity-schools. The dangerous classes began to be recognised as an awful fact which must be faced; and faced, not by repression, but by improvement. The 'Perils of the Nation' began to occupy the attention not merely of politicians, but of philosophers, physicians, priests; and the admirable book which assumed that title did but re-echo the feeling of thousands of earnest hearts.

Ever since that time, scheme on scheme of improvement has been not only proposed, but carried out. A general interest of the upper classes in the lower, a general desire to do good, and to learn how good can be done, has been awakened throughout England, such as, I boldly say, never before existed in any country upon earth; and England, her eyes opened to her neglect of these classes without whose strong arms her wealth and genius would be useless, has put herself into a permanent state of confession of sin, repentance, and amendment, which I verily trust will be accepted by Almighty God; and will, in spite of our present shame and sorrow,* in spite of shame and sorrow which

* This was said during the Indian rebellion.

may be yet in store for us, save alive both the soul and the body of this ancient people.

Let us then, that we may learn how to bear our part in this great work of Social Reform, consider awhile great cities, their good and evil; and let us start from the facts about your own city of which I have just put you in remembrance. The universal law will be best understood from the particular instance; and best of all, from the instance with which you are most intimately acquainted. And do not, I entreat you, fear that I shall be rude enough to say anything which may give pain to you, my generous hosts; or presumptuous enough to impute blame to any one for events which happened long ago, and of the exciting causes of which I know little or nothing. Bristol was then merely in the same state in which other cities of England were, and in which every city on the Continent is now; and the local exciting causes of that outbreak, the personal conduct of A or B in it, is just what we ought most carefully to forget, if we wish to look at the real root of the matter. If consumption, latent in the constitution, have broken out in active mischief, the wise physician will trouble his head little with the particular accident which woke up the sleeping disease. The disease was there, and if one thing had not awakened it, some other would. And so, if the population of a great city have got into a socially diseased state, it matters little what shock may have caused it to explode. Politics may, in one case, fanaticism in another, national hatred in a third, hunger in a fourth—perhaps even, as in Byzantium of old, no more important matter than a jealousy between the blue and the green charioteers in the theatre, may inflame a whole population to madness and civil war. Our business is not with the nature of the igniting spark, but of the powder which is ignited.

I will not, then, to begin, go as far as some who say that 'A great city is a great evil.' We cannot say that Bristol was in 1830, or is now, a great evil: It represents so much realized wealth: and that, again, so much employment for thousands. It represents so much commerce; so much knowledge of foreign lands; so much distribution of their products; so much science, employed about that distribution.

And it is undeniable, that as yet we have had no means of rapid and cheap distribution of goods, whether imports or manufactures, save by this crowding of human beings into great cities, for the more easy despatch of business. Whether we shall devise other means hereafter is a question of which I shall speak presently. Meanwhile, no man is to be blamed for the existence, hardly even for the evils, of great cities. The process of their growth has been very simple. They have gathered themselves round abbeys and castles, for the sake of protection; round courts, for the sake of law; round ports, for the sake of commerce; round coal mines, for the sake of manufacture. Before the existence of railroads, penny-posts, electric telegraphs, men were compelled to be as close as possible to each other, in order to work together.

When the population was small, and commerce feeble, the cities grew to no very great size, and the bad effects of this crowding were not felt. The cities of England in the Middle Age were too small to keep their inhabitants week after week, month after month, in one deadly vapour bath of foul gas; and though the mortality among infants was probably excessive, yet we should have seen among the adult survivors few or none of those stunted and etiolated figures so common now in England, as well as on the Continent. The green fields were close outside the walls, where lads and lasses

went a-maying, and children gathered flowers, and sober burghers with their wives took the evening walk; there were the butts, too, close outside, where stalwart prentice lads ran and wrestled, and pitched the bar, and played backsword, and practised with the long-bow; and sometimes, in stormy times, turned out for a few months as ready trained soldiers, and, like Ulysses of old,

> Drank delight of battle with their peers,

and then returned again to the workshop and the loom. The very mayor and aldermen went forth, at five o'clock on the summer's morning, with hawk and leaping pole, after duck and heron; or hunted the hare in state, probably in the full glory of furred gown and gold chain; and then returned to breakfast, and doubtless transacted their day's business all the better for their morning's gallop on the breezy downs.

But there was another side to this genial and healthy picture. A hint that this was a state of society which had its conditions, its limit; and if those were infringed, woe alike to burgher and to prentice. Every now and then epidemic disease entered the jolly city—and then down went strong and weak, rich and poor, before the invisible and seemingly supernatural arrows of that angel of death whom they had been pampering unwittingly in every bed-room.

They fasted, they prayed; but in vain. They called the pestilence a judgment of God: and they called it by a true name. But they knew not (and who are we to blame them for not knowing?) what it was that God was judging thereby—foul air, foul water, unclean back yards, stifling attics, houses hanging over the narrow street, till light and air were alike shut out. That there lay the sin; and that to amend that was the repentance which God demanded.

Yet we cannot blame them. They showed that the

crowded city life can bring out human nobleness as well as human baseness; that to be crushed into contact with their fellow-men, forced at least the loftier and tender souls to know their fellow-men, and therefore to care for them, to love them, to die for them. Yes—from one temptation the city life is free, to which the country life is sadly exposed—that isolation which, self-contented and self-helping, forgets in its surly independence that man is his brother's keeper. In cities, on the contrary, we find that the stories of these old pestilences, when the first panic terror has past, become, however tragical, still beautiful and heroic; and we read of noble-hearted men and women palliating ruin which they could not cure, braving dangers which seemed to them miraculous, from which they were utterly defenceless, spending money, time, and after all, life itself, upon sufferers from whom they might without shame have fled.

They are very cheering, the stories of the old city pestilences; and the nobleness which they brought out in the heart of many a townsman who had seemed absorbed in the lust of gain—who perhaps had been really absorbed in it—till that fearful hour awakened in him his better self, and taught him, not self-aggrandizement, but self-sacrifice; begetting in him, out of the very depth of darkness, new and divine light. That nobleness, doubt it not, exists as ever in the hearts of citizens: may God grant us to see the day when it shall awaken to exert itself, not for the palliation, not even for the cure, but for the prevention, yea, the utter extermination, of pestilence.

About the middle of the sixteenth century, as far as I can ascertain, another and even more painful phenomenon appears in our great cities—a dangerous class. How it arose is not yet clear. That the Reformation had something to do with the matter, we can hardly

doubt. At the dissolution of the monasteries, the more idle, ignorant, and profligate members of the mendicant orders, unable to live any longer on the alms of the public, sunk, probably, into vicious penury. The frightful misgovernment of this country during the minority of Edward the Sixth, especially the conversion of tilled lands into pasture, had probably the effect of driving the surplus agricultural population into the great towns. But the social history of this whole period is as yet obscure, and I have no right to give an opinion on it. Another element, and a more potent one, is to be found in the discharged soldiers who came home from foreign war, and the sailors who returned from our voyages of discovery, and from our raids against the Spaniards, too often crippled by scurvy, or by Tropic fevers, with perhaps a little prize money, which was as hastily spent as it had been hastily gained. The later years of Elizabeth, and the whole of James the First's reign, disclose to us an ugly state of society in the low streets of all our sea-port towns; and Bristol, as one of the great starting points of West Indian adventure, was probably, during the seventeenth century, as bad as any city in England. According to Ben Jonson, and the playwriters of these days, the beggars became a regular fourth-estate, with their own laws, and even their own language—of which we may remark, that the thieves' Latin of those days is full of German words, indicating that its inventors had been employed in the Continental wars of the time. How that class sprung up, we may see, I suppose, pretty plainly, from Shakspeare's 'Henry the Fifth.' Whether Nym, Pistol, and Bardolph, Doll and Mrs. Quickly, existed in the reign of Henry the Fifth, they certainly existed in the reign of Elizabeth. They are probably sketches from life of people whom Shakspeare had seen in Alsatia and the Mint.

To these merely rascal elements, male and female, we must add, I fear, those whom mere penury, from sickness, failure, want of employment, drove into dwellings of the lowest order. Such people, though not criminal themselves, are but too likely to become the parents of criminals. I am not blaming them, poor souls, God forbid. I am merely stating a fact. When we examine into the ultimate cause of a dangerous class; into the one property common to all its members, whether thieves, beggars, profligates, or the merely pauperized—we find it to be this loss of self-respect. As long as that remains, poor souls may struggle on heroically, pure amid penury, filth, degradation unspeakable. But when self-respect is lost, they are lost with it. And whatever may be the fate of virtuous parents, children brought up in dens of physical and moral filth cannot retrieve self-respect. They sink, they must sink, into a life on a level with the sights, sounds, aye, the very smells, which surround them. It is not merely that the child's mind is contaminated, by seeing and hearing, in overcrowded houses, what he should not hear and see: but the whole physical circumstances of his life are destructive of self-respect. He has no means for washing himself properly: but he has enough of the innate sense of beauty and fitness to feel that he ought not to be dirty; he thinks that others despise him for being dirty, and he half despises himself for being so. In all ragged schools and reformatories, so they tell me, the first step toward restoring self-respect is to make the poor fellows clean. From that moment they begin to look on themselves as new men—with a new start, new hopes, new duties. For not without the deepest physical as well as moral meaning, was baptism chosen by the old Easterns, and adopted by our Lord Jesus Christ, as the sign of a new life; and outward purity made the token and symbol

of that inward purity which is the parent of self-respect, and manliness, and a clear conscience; of the free forehead, and the eye which meets boldly and honestly the eye of its fellow-man.

But would that mere physical dirt were all that the lad has to contend with. There is the desire of enjoyment. Moral and intellectual enjoyment he has none, and can have none: but not to enjoy something is to be dead in life; and to the lowest physical pleasures he will betake himself, and all the more fiercely because his opportunities of enjoyment are so limited. It is a hideous subject; I will pass it by very shortly; only asking of you, as I have to ask daily of myself—this solemn question:—We, who have so many comforts, so many pleasures of body, soul, and spirit, from the lowest appetite to the highest aspiration, that we can gratify each in turn with due and wholesome moderation, innocently and innocuously,—who are we that we should judge the poor untaught and overtempted inhabitant of Temple-street and Lewis's-mead, if, having but one or two pleasures possible to him, he snatches greedily, even foully, at the little which he has?

And this brings me to another, and a most fearful evil of great cities, namely, drunkenness. I am one of those who cannot, on scientific grounds, consider drunkenness as a cause of evil, but as an effect. Of course it is a cause—a cause of endless crime and misery: but I am convinced that to cure, you must inquire, not what it causes, but what causes it? And for that we shall not have to seek far.

The main exciting cause of drunkenness is, I believe, firmly, bad air and bad lodging.

A man shall spend his days between a foul alley where he breathes sulphuretted hydrogen, a close work-

shop where he breathes carbonic acid, and a close and foul bed-room where he breathes both. In neither of the three places, meanwhile, has he his fair share of that mysterious chemical agent without which health is impossible, the want of which betrays itself at once in the dull eye, the sallow cheek—namely, light. Believe me, it is no mere poetic metaphor which connects in Scripture, Light with Life. It is the expression of a deep law, one which holds as true in the physical as in the spiritual world; a case in which (as perhaps in all cases) the laws of the visible world are the counterparts of those of the invisible world, and Earth is the symbol of Heaven.

Deprive, then, the man of his fair share of fresh air and pure light, and what follows? His blood is not properly oxygenated; his nervous energy is depressed, his digestion impaired, especially if his occupation be sedentary, or requires much stooping, and the cavity of the chest thereby becomes contracted; and for that miserable feeling of languor and craving he knows but one remedy—the passing stimulus of alcohol;—a passing stimulus; leaving fresh depression behind it, and requiring fresh doses of stimulant, till it becomes a habit, a slavery, a madness. Again, there is an intellectual side to the question. The depressed nervous energy, the impaired digestion, depress the spirits. The man feels low in mind as well as in body. Whence shall he seek exhilaration? Not in that stifling home which has caused the depression itself. He knows none other than the tavern, and the company which the tavern brings; God help him!

Yes, ladies and gentlemen, it is easy to say, God help him: but it is not difficult for man to help him also. Drunkenness is a very curable malady. The last fifty years have seen it all but die out among the

upper classes of this country. And what has caused the improvement?

Certainly, in the first place, the spread of education. Every man has now a hundred means of rational occupation and amusement which were closed to his grandfather; and among the deadliest enemies of drunkenness, we may class the printing press, the railroad, and the importation of foreign art and foreign science, which we owe to the late forty years' peace. We can find plenty of amusement now, beside the old one of sitting round the table and talking over wine. Why should not the poor man share in our gain? But over and above, there are causes simply physical. Our houses are better ventilated. The stifling old four-post bed has given place to the airy curtainless one; and what is more than all—we wash. That morning cold bath which foreigners consider as Young England's strangest superstition, has done as much, believe me, to abolish drunkenness, as any other cause whatsoever. With a clean skin in healthy action, and nerves and muscles braced by a sudden shock, men do not crave for artificial stimulants. I have found that, cæteris paribus, a man's sobriety is in direct proportion to his cleanliness. I believe it would be so in all classes had they the means.

And they ought to have the means. Whatever other rights a man has, or ought to have, this at least he has, if society demands of him that he should earn his own livelihood, and not be a torment and a burden to his neighbours. He has a right to water, to air, to light. In demanding that, he demands no more than nature has given to the wild beast of the forest. He is better than they. Treat him, then, as well as God has treated them. If we require of him to be a man, we must at least put him on a level with the brutes.

We have then, first of all, to face the existence of a dangerous class of this kind, into which the weaker as well as the worse members of society have a continual tendency to sink. A class which, not respecting itself, does not respect others; which has nothing to lose and all to gain by anarchy; in which the lowest passions, seldom gratified, are ready to burst out and avenge themselves by frightful methods.

For the reformation of that class, thousands of good men are now working; hundreds of benevolent plans are being set on foot. Honour to them all; whether they succeed or fail, each of them does some good; each of them rescues at least a few fellow-men, dear to God as you and I are, out of the nether pit. Honour to them all, I say: but I should not be honest with you this night, if I did not assert most solemnly my conviction, that reformatories, ragged schools, even hospitals and asylums, treat only the symptoms, not the actual causes, of the disease; and that the causes are only to be touched by improving the simple physical conditions of the class; by abolishing foul air, foul water, foul lodging, overcrowded dwellings, in which morality is difficult and common decency impossible. You may breed a pig in a sty, ladies and gentlemen, and make a learned pig of him after all: but you cannot breed a man in a sty, and make a learned man of him; or indeed, in the true sense of that great word, a man at all.

And remember, that these physical influences of great cities, physically depressing and morally degrading, influence, though to a less extent, the classes above the lowest stratum.

The honest and skilled workman feels their effects. Compelled too often to live where he can, in order to be near his work, he finds himself perpetually in con-

tact with a class utterly inferior to himself, and his children exposed to contaminating influences from which he would gladly remove them: but how can he? Next door to him, even in the same house with him, may be enacted scenes of brutality or villany which I will not speak of here. He may shut his own eyes and ears to them: but he cannot shut his children's. He may vex his righteous soul daily, like Lot of old, with the foul conversation of the wicked: but, like Lot of old, he cannot keep his children from mixing with the inhabitants of the wicked city, learning their works, and at last being involved in their doom. Oh, ladies and gentlemen, if there be one class for whom above all others I will plead, in season and out of season; if there be one social evil which I will din into the ears of my countrymen whenever God gives me a chance, it is this—The honest and the virtuous workman, and his unnatural contact with the dishonest and the foul. I know well the nobleness which exists in the average of that class, in men and in wives—their stern, uncomplaining, valorous self-denial; and nothing more stirs my pity than to see them struggling to bring up a family in a moral and physical atmosphere where right education is impossible. We lavish sympathy enough upon the criminal: for God's sake let us keep a little of it for the honest man. We spend thousands in carrying out the separation of classes in prison: for God's sake let us try to separate them a little before they go to prison. We are afraid of the dangerous classes: for God's sake let us bestir ourselves to stop that reckless confusion and neglect which reign in the alleys and courts of our great towns, and which recruit those very dangerous classes from the class which ought to be, and is still, in spite of our folly, England's strength and England's glory. Let us no longer stand by idle,

and see moral purity, in street after street, pent in the same noisome den with moral corruption, to be involved in one common doom, as the Latin tyrant of old used to bind together the dead corpse and the living victim. But let the man who would deserve well of his city, well of his country, set his heart and brain to the great purpose of giving the workman dwellings fit for a virtuous and a civilized being, and like the priest of old, stand between the living and the dead, that the plague may be stayed.

Hardly less is the present physical state of our great cities felt by that numerous class which is, next to the employer, the most important in a city. I mean the shopmen, clerks, and all the men, principally young ones, who are employed exclusively in the work of distribution. I have a great respect, I may say affection, for this class. In Bristol I know nothing of them; save that, from what I hear, the clerks ought in general to have a better status here than in most cities. I am told that it is the practice here for merchants to take into their houses very young boys, and train them to their business; that this connexion between employer and employed is hereditary, and that clerkships pass from father to son in the same family. I rejoice to hear it. It is pleasant to find anywhere a relic of the old patriarchal bond, the permanent nexus between master and man, which formed so important and so healthful an element of the ancient mercantile system. One would gladly overlook a little favouritism and nepotism, a little sticking square men into round holes and of round men into square holes, for the sake of having a class of young clerks and employés who felt that their master's business was their business, his honour theirs, his prosperity theirs.

But over and above this, whenever I have come in

contact with this clerk and shopman class, they have imprest me with considerable respect, not merely as to what they may be hereafter, but what they are now.

They are the class from which the ranks of our commercial men, our emigrants, are continually recruited; therefore their right education is a matter of national importance.

The lad who stands behind a Bristol counter may be, five-and-twenty years hence, a large employer—an owner of houses and land in far countries across the seas—a member of some colonial parliament—the founder of a wealthy family. How necessary for the honour of Britain, for the welfare of generations yet unborn, that that young man should have, in body, soul, and spirit, the loftiest, and yet the most practical of educations.

His education, too, such as it is, is one which makes me respect him as a class. Of course, he is sometimes one of those 'gents' whom 'Punch' so ruthlessly holds up to just ridicule. He is sometimes a vulgar fop, sometimes fond of low profligacy—of betting-houses and casinos. Well.—I know no class in any age or country among which a fool may not be found here and there. But that the 'gent' is the average type of this class, I should utterly deny, from such experience as I have had. The peculiar note and mark of the average clerk and shopman, is, I think, in these days, intellectual activity, a keen desire for self-improvement, and for independence, honourable, because self-acquired. But as he is distinctly a creature of the city; as all city influences bear at once on him more than on any other class, so we see in him, I think, more than in any class, the best and the worst effects of modern city life. The worst, of course, is low profligacy: but of that I do not speak here. I mean that in the same

man the good and evil of a city life meet. And in this way.

In a country man like me, coming up out of wild and silent moorlands into a great city, the first effect of the change is increased intellectual activity. The perpetual stream of human faces, the innumerable objects of interest in every shop window, are enough to excite the mind to action, which is increased by the simple fact of speaking to fifty different human beings in the day instead of five. Now in the city-bred youth this excited state of mind is chronic, permanent. It is denoted plainly enough by the difference between the countryman's face and that of the townsman. The former in its best type (and it is often very noble) composed, silent, self-contained, often stately, often listless; the latter mobile, eager, observant, often brilliant, often self-conscious.

Now if you keep this rapid and tense mind in a powerful and healthy body, it would do right good work. Right good work it does, indeed, as it is: but still it might do better.

For what are the faults of this class? What do the obscurantists (now, thank God, fewer every day) allege as the objection to allowing young men to educate themselves out of working hours?

They become, it is said, discontented, conceited, dogmatical. They take up hasty notions, they condemn fiercely what they have no means of understanding; they are too fond of fine words, of the excitement of spouting themselves, and hearing others spout.

Well. I suppose there must be a little truth in the accusation, or it would not have been invented. There is no smoke without fire; and these certainly are the faults of which the cleverest middle-class young men whom I know are most in danger.

But—— one fair look at these men's faces ought to tell common sense that the cause is rather physical than moral. Confined to sedentary occupations, stooping over desks and counters in close rooms, unable to obtain that fair share of bodily exercise which nature demands, and in continual mental effort, their nerves and brain have been excited at the expense of their lungs, their digestion, and their whole nutritive system. Their complexions show a general ill-health. Their mouths, too often, hint at latent disease. What wonder if there be an irritability of brain and nerve? I blame them no more for it than I blame a man for being somewhat touchy while he is writhing in the gout. Indeed less; for gout is very often a man's own fault: but these men's ill health is not. And therefore, everything which can restore to them health of body, will preserve in them health of mind. Everything which ministers to the corpus sanum, will minister also to the mentem sanam; and a walk on Durdham Downs, a game of cricket, a steamer excursion to Chepstow, shall send them home again happier and wiser men, than poring over many wise volumes or hearing many wise lectures. How often is a worthy fellow spending his leisure honourably in hard reading, when he had much better have been scrambling over hedge and ditch, without a thought in his head save what was put there by the grass and the butterflies, and the green trees and the blue sky? And therefore I do press earnestly, both on employers and employed, the incalculable value of athletic sports and country walks for those whose business compels them to pass the day in the heart of the city; I press on you, with my whole soul, the excellency of the early closing movement; not so much because it enables young men to attend mechanics' institutes, as because it enables them, if they choose, to get a good game of leap-frog.

You may smile: but try the experiment, and see how, as the chest expands, the muscles harden, and the cheek grows ruddy and the lips firm, and sound sleep refreshes the lad for his next day's work, the temper will become more patient, the spirits more genial; there will be less tendency to brood angrily over the inequalities of fortune, and to accuse society for evils which as yet she knows not how to cure.

There is a class, again, above all these, which is doubtless the most important of all; and yet of which I can say little here—the capitalist, small and great, from the shopkeeper to the merchant prince.

Heaven forbid that I should speak of them with aught but respect. There are few figures, indeed, in the world on which I look with higher satisfaction than on the British merchant; the man whose ships are on a hundred seas; who sends comfort and prosperity to tribes whom he never saw, and honourably enriches himself by enriching others. There is something to me chivalrous, even kingly, in the merchant life; and there were men in Bristol of old—as I doubt not there are now—who nobly fulfilled that ideal. I cannot forget that Bristol was the nurse of America; that more than two hundred years ago, the daring and genius of Bristol converted yonder narrow stream into a mighty artery, down which flowed the young life-blood of that great Transatlantic nation destined to be hereafter, I believe, the greatest which the world ever saw. Yes—were I asked to sum up in one sentence the good of great cities, I would point first to Bristol, and then to the United States, and say, That is what great cities can do. By concentrating in one place, and upon one object, men, genius, information, and wealth, they can conquer new-found lands by arts instead of arms; they can beget new nations;

and replenish and subdue the earth from pole to pole.

Meanwhile, there is one fact about employers, in all cities which I know, which may seem commonplace to you, but which to me is very significant. Whatsoever business they may do in the city, they take good care, if possible, not to live in it. As soon as a man gets wealthy now-a-days, his first act is to take to himself a villa in the country. Do I blame him? Certainly not. It is an act of common sense. He finds that the harder he works, the more he needs of fresh air, free country life, innocent recreation; and he takes it, and does his city business all the better for it, lives all the longer for it, is the cheerfuller, more genial man for it. One great social blessing, I think, which railroads have brought, is the throwing open country life to men of business. I say blessing: both to the men themselves and to the country where they settle. The citizen takes an honest pride in rivalling the old country gentleman, in beating him in his own sphere, as gardener, agriculturist, sportsman, head of the village: and by his superior business habits and his command of ready money, he very often does so. For fifty miles round London, wherever I see progress—improved farms, model cottages, new churches, new schools—I find, in three cases out of four, that the author is some citizen who fifty years ago would have known nothing but the narrow city life, and have had probably no higher pleasures than those of the table; whose dreams would have been, not as now, of model farms and schools, but of turtle and port-wine.

My only regret when I see so pleasant a sight is—Oh that the good man could have taken his workmen with him!

Taken his workmen with him?

I assure you that, after years of thought, I see no other remedy for the worst evils of city life. 'If,' says the old proverb, 'the mountain will not come to Muhammed, then Muhammed must go the mountain.' And if you cannot bring the country into the city, the city must go into the country.

Do not fancy me a dreamer dealing with impossible ideals. I know well what cannot be done: fair and grand as it would be, if it were done, a model city is impossible in England. We have here no Eastern despotism (and it is well we have not) to destroy an old Babylon, as that mighty genius Nabuchonosor did, and build a few miles off a new Babylon, one-half the area of which was park and garden, fountain and watercourse—a diviner work of art, to my mind, than the finest picture or statue which the world ever saw. We have not either (and it is well for us that we have not) a model republic occupying a new uncleared land. We cannot, as they do in America, plan out a vast city on some delicious and healthy site amid the virgin forest, with streets one hundred feet in breadth, squares and boulevards already planted by God's hand with majestic trees; and then leave the great design to be hewn out of the wilderness, street after street, square after square, by generations yet unborn. That too is a magnificent ideal: but it cannot be ours. And it is well for us, I believe, that it cannot. The great value of land, the enormous amount of vested interests, the necessity of keeping to ancient sites around which labour, as in Manchester, or commerce, as in Bristol, has clustered itself on account of natural advantages, all these things make any attempt to rebuild in cities impossible. But they will cause us at last, I believe, to build better things than cities. They will issue in a complete interpenetration of city and of country, a

complete fusion of their different modes of life, and a combination of the advantages of both, such as no country in the world has ever seen. We shall have, I believe and trust, ere another generation has past, model lodging-houses springing up, not in the heart of the town, but on the hills around it; and those will be—economy, as well as science and good government, will compel them to be—not ill-built rows of undrained cottages, each rented for awhile, and then left to run into squalidity and disrepair, but huge blocks of building, each with its common eating-house, bar, baths, washhouses, reading-room, common conveniences of every kind, where, in free and pure country air, the workman will enjoy comforts which our own grandfathers could not command, and at a lower price than that which he now pays for such accommodation as I should be ashamed to give to my own horses; while from these great blocks of building branch lines will convey the men to or from their work by railroad, without loss of time, labour, or health.

Then the city will become what it ought to be; the workshop, and not the dwelling-house, of a mighty and healthy people. The old foul alleys, as they become gradually depopulated, will be replaced by fresh warehouses, fresh public buildings; and the city, in spite of all its smoke and dirt, will become a place on which the workman will look down with pride and joy, because it will be to him no longer a prison and a poison-trap, but merely a place for honest labour.

This, gentlemen and ladies, is my ideal; and I cannot but hope and believe that I shall live to see it realized here and there, gradually and cautiously (as is our good and safe English habit), but still earnestly and well. Did I see but the movement commenced

in carnest, I should be inclined to cry a 'Nunc Domine dimittis'—I have lived long enough to see a noble work begun, which cannot but go on and prosper, so beneficial would it be found. I tell you, that but this afternoon, as the Bath train dashed through the last cutting, and your noble vale and noble city opened before me, I looked round upon the overhanging crags, the wooded glens, and said to myself—There, upon the rock in the free air and sunlight, and not here, beneath yon pall of smoke by the lazy pools and festering tidal muds, ought the Bristol workman to live. Oh that I may see the time when on the blessed Sabbath eve these hills shall swarm as thick with living men as bean-fields with the summer bees; when the glens shall ring with the laughter of ten thousand children, with limbs as steady, and cheeks as ruddy, as those of my own lads and lasses at home; and the artizan shall find his Sabbath a day of rest indeed, in which not only soul but body may gather health and nerve for the week's work, under the soothing and purifying influences of those common natural sights and sounds which God has given as a heritage even to the gipsy on the moor; and of which no man can be deprived without making his life a burden to himself, perhaps a burden to those around him.

But it will be asked, Will such improvements pay? I respect that question. I do not sneer at it, and regard it, as some are too apt to do, as a sign of the mercenary and money-loving spirit of the present age. I look on it as a healthy sign of the English mind; a sign that we believe, as the old Jews did, that political and social righteousness is inseparably connected with wealth and prosperity. The old Psalms and prophets have taught us that lesson; and God forbid that we

should forget it. The world is right well made; and the laws of trade and of social economy, just as much as the laws of nature, are divine facts: and only by obeying them can we thrive. And I had far sooner hear a people asking of every scheme of good, Will it pay? than throwing themselves headlong into that merely sentimental charity to which superstitious nations have always been prone,—charity which effects no permanent good, which, whether in Hindostan or in Italy, debases, instead of raising, the suffering classes, because it breaks the laws of social economy.

No, let us still believe that if a thing is right, it will sooner or later pay; and in social questions, make the profitableness of any scheme a test of its rightness. It is a rough test; not an infallible one at all: but it is a fair enough to work by.

And as for the improvements at which I have hinted, I will boldly answer, that they will pay.

They will pay directly and at once, in the saving of poor-rates. They will pay by exterminating epidemics, and numberless chronic forms of disease which now render thousands burdens on the public purse; consumers, instead of producers of wealth. They will pay by gradually absorbing the dangerous classes; and removing from temptation and degradation a generation yet unborn. They will pay in the increased content, cheerfulness, which comes with health; in increased goodwill of employed towards employers. They will pay by putting the masses into a state fit for education. They will pay, too, in such fearful times as these, by the increased physical strength and hardihood of the town populations. For it is from the city, rather than from the country, that our armies must mainly be recruited. Not only is the townsman more ready to enlist than the countryman, because in the town the

labour market is most likely to be overstocked: but the townsman actually makes a better soldier than the countryman. He is a shrewder, more active, more self-helping man: give him but the chances of maintaining the same physical strength and health as the countryman, and he will support the honour of the British arms as gallantly as the Highlander or the Connaughtman, and restore the days when the invincible prentice-boys of London carried terror into the heart of foreign lands. In all ages, in all times, whether for war or for peace, it will pay. The true wealth of a nation is the health of her masses.

It may seem to some here that I have dealt too much throughout this lecture with merely material questions; that I ought to have spoken more of intellectual progress; perhaps, as a clergyman, more also of spiritual and moral regeneration.

I can only answer, that if this be a fault on my part, it is a deliberate one. I have spoken, whether rightly or wrongly, concerning what I know—concerning matters which are to me articles of faith altogether indubitable, irreversible, Divine.

Be it that these are merely questions of physical improvement. I see no reason in that why they should be left to laymen, or urged only on worldly grounds and self-interest. I do not find that when urged on those grounds, the advice is listened to. I believe that it will not be listened to, until the consciences of men, as well as their brains, are engaged in these questions; until they are put on moral grounds, shown to have connexion with moral laws; and so made questions not merely of interest, but of duty, honour, chivalry.

I cannot but see, moreover, how many phenomena which are supposed to be spiritual, are simply physical;

how many cases which are referred to my profession, are properly the object of the medical man. I cannot but see, that unless there be healthy bodies, it is impossible in the long run to have a generation of healthy souls; I cannot but see that mankind are as prone now as ever to deny the sacredness and perfection of God's physical universe, as an excuse for their own ignorance and neglect thereof; to search the highest heaven for causes which lie patent at their feet, and like the heathen of old time, to impute to some capricious anger of the gods calamities which spring from their own greed, haste, and ignorance.

And therefore, because I am a priest, and glory in the name of a priest, I have tried to fulfil somewhat of that which seems to me the true office of a priest—namely, to proclaim to man the Divine element which exists in all even the smallest thing, because each thing is a thought of God himself; to make men understand that God is indeed about their path and about their bed, spying out all their ways; that they are indeed fearfully and wonderfully made, and that God's hand lies for ever on them, in the form of physical laws, sacred, irreversible, universal, reaching from one end of the universe to the other; that whosoever persists in breaking those laws, reaps his sure punishment of weakness and sickness, sadness and self-reproach: that whosoever causes them to be broken by others, reaps his sure punishment in finding that he has transformed his fellow-men into burdens and curses, instead of helpmates and blessings. To say this, is a priest's duty; and then to preach the good news that the remedy is patent, easy, close at hand; that many of the worst evils which afflict humanity may be exterminated by simple common sense, and the justice and mercy which does to others as it would be done by; to

awaken men to the importance of the visible world, that they may judge from thence the higher importance of that invisible world whereof this is but the garment and the type; and in all times and places, instead of keeping the key of knowledge to pamper one's own power or pride, to lay that key frankly and trustfully in the hand of every human being who hungers after truth, and to say—Child of God, this key is thine as well as mine Enter boldly into thy Father's house, and behold the wonder, the wisdom, the beauty of its laws and its organisms, from the mightiest planet over thy head, to the tiniest insect beneath thy feet. Look at it, trustfully, joyfully, earnestly; for it is thy heritage. Behold its perfect fitness for thy life here; and judge from thence its fitness for thy nobler life hereafter.

ON THE STUDY OF NATURAL HISTORY.*

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,—I speak to you to-night as to persons assembled, somewhat, no doubt, for amusement, but still more for instruction. Institutions such as this were originally founded for the purpose of instruction; to supply to those who wish to educate themselves some of the advantages of a regular course of scholastic or scientific training, by means of classes and of lectures.

I myself prize classes far higher than I do lectures. From my own experience, a lecture is often a very dangerous method of teaching; it is apt to engender in the mind of men ungrounded conceit and sciolism, or the bad habit of knowing about subjects without really knowing the subject itself. A young man hears an interesting lecture, and carries away from it doubtless a great many new facts and results: but he really must not go home fancying himself a much wiser man; and why? Because he has only heard the lecturer's side of the story. He has been forced to take the facts and the results on trust. He has not examined the facts for himself. He has had no share in the process by which the results were arrived at. In short, he has not gone into the real scientia, that is, the 'knowing' of the matter. He has gained a certain quantity of second-hand information: but he has gained nothing in mental training, nothing in the great 'art of learn-

* Lecture delivered at Reading, 1846.

ing,' the art of finding out things for himself, and of discerning truth from falsehood. Of course, where the lecture is a scientific one, illustrated by diagrams, this defect is not so extreme: but still the lecturer who shows you experiments, is forced to choose those which shall be startling and amusing, rather than important; he is seldom or never able, unless he is a man of at once the deepest science and the most extraordinary powers of amusing, to give you those experiments in the proper order which will unfold the subject to you step by step; and after all, an experiment is worth very little to you, unless you perform it yourself, ask questions about it, or vary it a little to solve difficulties which arise in your own mind.

Now mind—I do not say all this to make you give up attending lectures. Heaven forbid. They amuse, that is, they turn the mind off from business; they relax it, and as it were bathe and refresh it with new thoughts, after the day's drudgery, or the day's commonplaces; they fill it with pleasant and healthful images for afterthought. Above all, they make one feel what a fair, wide, wonderful world one lives in; how much there is to be known, and how little one knows; and to the earnest man suggest future subjects of study. I only ask you not to expect from lectures what they can never give: but as to what they can give, I consider, I assure you, the lecturer's vocation a most honourable one in the present day, even if we look on him as a mere advertiser of nature's wonders. As such, I appear here to-night; not to teach you natural history; for that you can only teach yourselves: but to set before you the subject and its value, and if possible, allure some of you to the study of it.

I have said that lectures do not supply mental training; that only personal study can do that. The

next question is, what study? And that is a question which I do not answer in a hurry, when I say, the study of natural history. It is not, certainly, a study which a young man entering on the business of self-education would be likely to take up. To him, naturally, man is the most important subject. His first wish is to know the human world; to know what men are, what they have thought, what they have done. And therefore, you find that poetry, history, politics, and philosophy are the matters which most attract the self-guided student. I do not blame him: but he seems to me to be beginning at the middle, rather than at the beginning. I fell into the same fault myself more than once, when I was younger, and meddled in matters too high for me, instead of refraining my soul, and keeping it low; so I can sympathize with others who do so. But I can assure them that they will find such lofty studies do them good, only in proportion as they have first learnt the art of learning. Unless they have learnt to face facts manfully, to discriminate between them skilfully, to draw conclusions from them rigidly; unless they have learnt in all things to look, not for what they would like to be true, but for what is true, because God has done it and it cannot be undone—then they will be in danger of taking up only the books which suit their own prejudices—and every one has his prejudices—and using them, not to correct their own notions, but to corroborate and pamper them; to confirm themselves in their first narrow guesses, instead of enlarging those guesses into certainty. The lad of a Tory turn will read Tory books, the lad of a Radical turn Radical books; and the green spectacles of party and prejudice will be deepened in hue as he reads on, instead of being thrown away for the clear white

glass of truth, which will show him reason in all honest sides, and good in all honest men.

But, says the young man, I wish to be wide-minded and wide-hearted—I study for that very purpose. I will be fair, I will be patient, I will hear all sides ere I judge. And I doubt not that he speaks honestly. But (I quote with all reverence) though the spirit be willing, the flesh is weak. Studies which have to do with man's history, man's thoughts, man's feelings, are too exciting, too personal, often, alas, too tragical, to allow us to read them calmly at first. The men and women of whom we read are so like ourselves (for the human heart is the same in every age), that we unconsciously begin to love or hate them in the first five minutes, and read history as we do a novel, hurrying on to see when the supposed hero and heroine get safely married, and the supposed villains safely hanged, at the end of the chapter, having forgotten all the while in our haste to ascertain which is the hero, and which is the villain. Mary Queen of Scots was 'beautiful and unfortunate'—what heart would not bleed for a beautiful woman in trouble? Why stop to ask whether she brought it on herself? She was seventeen years in prison. Why stop to ascertain what sort of a prison it was? And as for her guilt, the famous casket letters were of course a vile forgery. Impossible that they could be true. Hoot down the cold-hearted, and disagreeable, and troublesome man of facts, who will persist in his stupid attempt to disenchant you, and repeat—But the casket letters were not a forgery, and we can prove it, if you will but listen to the facts. Her prison, as we will show you (if you will be patient and listen to facts), consisted in greater pomp and luxury than that of most noblemen, with horses, hounds, books, music,

liberty to hunt and amuse herself in every way, even in intriguing with every court of Europe, as we can show you again, if you will be patient and listen to facts. And she herself was a very wicked and false woman, an adulteress and a murderess (though fearfully ill-trained in early youth), who sowed the wind, poor wretch, from girlhood to old age, and therefore reaped the whirlwind, receiving the just reward of her deeds. Catherine of Russia, meanwhile, instead of being beautiful and unfortunate, was only handsome and successful. Brand her as a disgrace to human nature. The morals and ways of the two were pretty much on a par, with these exceptions in Catherine's favour—that she had strong passions, Mary none; that she lived in outer darkness and practical heathendom, while Mary had the light shining all round her, and refused it deliberately again and again. What matter to the sentimentalist? Hiss the stupid hard-hearted man of facts, by all means. What if he be right? He has no business to be right; we will consider him wrong accordingly, of our own sovereign will and pleasure. For after all, if we had the facts put before us (says the conscience of many a hearer), we could not judge of them: we read to be amused and instructed, not to study cases like so many barristers. So is history read. And so, alas, is history written, too often, for want of a steady and severe training which would enable people to judge dispassionately of facts. In politics the case is the same. In poetry, which appeals more directly to the feelings, it must needs be still worse; as has been shown sadly enough of late by the success of several poems, in which every possible form of bad taste has only met with unbounded admiration from the many who have not had their senses exercised to discern between good and evil.

Now what seems to me to be wanted for young minds, is a study in which no personal likes or dislikes shall tempt them out of the path of mental honesty; a study in which they shall be free to look at facts exactly as they are, and draw their conclusions patiently and dispassionately. And such a study I have found in that of natural history.

Do not fancy it, I beg you, an easy thing to judge fairly of facts; even to discover the facts at all, when they are staring you in the face; and to see what it is that you do see. Any lawyer will tell you, that if you ask three honest men to bear testimony concerning an event which happened but yesterday, none of them, if he be at all an interested party, will give you exactly the same account of it: not that he wishes to say what is untrue; but that different parts of the whole matter having struck each man with different force, a different picture has been left on each man's memory. I have been utterly astounded of late, in investigating these strange stories of table-turning and spirit-rapping, to find how even clear-headed and well-instructed persons (as one had fancied them) become unable to examine fairly into a thing, the moment the desire to believe has entered the heart; and how no amount of mere cultivation, if the scientific habit of mind be wanting, can prevent people from finding (as in table-turning) miracles in the most simple mechanical accidents; or from becoming (as in spirit-rapping) the dupes of the most clumsy, palpable, and degrading impostures, even after they have been exposed over and over again in print. Humiliating, indeed, it is, in this so self-confident and boastful nineteenth century, amid steam-engines, railroads, electric telegraphs, and all the wonders of our inductive science, to find exploded superstitions leaping back into life even more monstrous and irrational than in past

ages, and to see our modern Pharisees and Sadducees, like those in Judea of old, seeking after a sign of an unseen world; and being unable to find one either in the heaven above or in the earth beneath, discovering it at last (I am almost ashamed to speak the words) under the parlour-table.

Against such extravagances, and against the loose, sentimental tone of mind which begets them, hardly anything would be a better safeguard, than the habitual study of nature. The chemist, the geologist, the botanist, the zoologist, has to deal with facts which will make him master of them, and of himself, only in proportion as he obeys them. Many of you doubtless know Lord Bacon's famous apothegm, Nature is only conquered by obeying her; and will understand me when I say, that you cannot understand, much less use for scientific purposes, the meanest pebble, unless you first obey that pebble. Paradoxical; but true. See this pebble which I hold in my hand, picked up out of the street as I came along; it shall be my only object to-night. There the thing is; and is as it is, and in no other way; and such it will be, and so it will behave and act, in spite of me, and all my fancies about it, and notions of what it ought to have been like, and what it ought to have done. It is a thought of God's; and strong by the eternal laws of matter, which are the will of God. It has the whole universe, sun, and stars, and all, backing it by God's appointment, to keep it where it is and what it is; and till (as Lord Bacon has it) I have discovered and obeyed the will of God revealed in that pebble, it is to me a riddle more insoluble than the Sphinx's, a fortress more impregnable than Sebastopol. I may crush it: but destroying is not conquering: but I cannot even mend the road with it prudently, until I have discovered whether

Almighty God has made it fit to mend roads with. I may have the genius of a Plato or of a Shakspeare, but all my genius will not avail to penetrate that pebble, or see anything in it but a little round dirty stone, until I have treated the pebble with reverence, as a thing independent of my likes and dislikes, fancies, and aspirations; and have asked it humbly to tell me its story, taking counsel meanwhile of hundreds of kindred pebbles, each as silent and reserved as this one; and watched and listened patiently, through many mistakes and misreadings, to what it has to say for itself, and what God has made it to be. And then at last that little black rounded pebble, from the street outside, may, and will surely, if I be patient and honest enough, tell me a tale wilder and grander than any which I could have dreamed for myself; will shame the meanness of my imagination, by the awful magnificence of God's facts, and say to me—

'Ages and Æons since, thousands on thousands of years before there was a man to till the ground, I the little pebble was a living sponge, in the milky depths of the great chalk ocean; and hundreds of living atomies, each more fantastic than a ghost-painter's dreams, swam round me, and grew on me, and multiplied, till I became a tiny hive of wonders, each one of which would take you a life to understand. And then, I cannot yet tell you how, and till I tell you you will never know, the delicate flint-needles in my skin gathered other particles of flint to them, and I and all my inhabitants became a stone; and the chalk-mud settled round us, I know not how, and covered us in; and for ages on ages I lay buried in the nether dark, and felt the glow of the nether fires, and was cracked and tost by a hundred earthquakes. Again and again I have been part of an island, and then again sunk beneath the sea, to be upheaved again

after long centuries, till I saw the light once more, and dropt from the face of some chalk cliff far away among high hills which have long since been swept off the face of the earth, and was tost by currents till I became a pebble on the beach, while Reading was a sand-bank in a shallow sea. There I lay and rolled till I was rounded, for many a century more; till flood after flood past over me, and a new earth was made; and I was mixed up with fresh flints from wasting chalk-hills, and with freestones from the Gloucestershire wolds, and with quartz-boulders from the mountains of Wales, while over me swept the carcases of drowned elephants, and bisons, and many a monstrous beast; and above me floated uprooted palms, and tropic fruits and seeds, and the wrecks of a dying world. And then there came another age,

> 'And it grew wondrous cold;
> And ice mast-high came floating by,
> As green as emerald;'

and as the icebergs melted in the sun, the stones and the silt fell out of them, and covered me up; and I was in darkness once more, vexed by many an earthquake, till I became part of this brave English land. And now I am a pebble here in Reading-street, to be ground beneath the wheels of busy men: and yet you cannot kill me, or hinder my fulfilling the law which cannot be broken. This year I am a pebble in the street; and next year I shall be dust upon the fields above; and the year after that I shall be alive again, and rise from the ground as fair green wheat-stems, bearing up food for the use of man. And even after that you cannot kill me. The trampled and sodden straw will rot only to enter into a new life; and I shall pass through a fresh cycle of strange adventures, age after age, till time shall be no more; doing my work in my generation, and fulfilling to the last the will of God, as faithfully as when I was

the water-breathing sponge in the abysses of the old chalk sea.'

All this and more, gentlemen and ladies, the pebble could tell to you, and will: but he is old and venerable, and like old men, he wishes to be approached with respect, and does not like to be questioned too much or too rapidly; so that you must not be offended if you meet with more than one rebuff from him; or if he keeps stubborn silence, till he has seen that you are a modest and attentive person, to whom it is worth while to open a little of his forty or fifty thousand years' experience.

Second only to the good effect of this study on the logical faculty, seems to me to be its effect on the imagination. Not merely in such objects as the pebble, whose history I have so hastily, but I must add faithfully, sketched; but in the tiniest piece of mould on a decayed fruit, the tiniest animalcule from the stagnant pool, will imagination find inexhaustible wonders, and fancy a fairy-land. And I beg my elder hearers not to look on this as light praise. Imagination is a valuable thing; and even if it were not, it is a thing, a real thing, a faculty which every one has, and with which you must do something. You cannot ignore it; it will assert its own existence. You will be wise not to neglect it in young children; for if you do not provide wholesome food for it, it will find unwholesome food for itself. I know that many, especially men of business, are inclined to sneer at it, and ask what is the use of it? The simple answer is, God has made it; and He has made nothing in vain. But you will find that in practice, in action, in business, imagination is a most useful faculty, and is so much mental capital, whensoever it is properly trained. Consider but this one thing, that without imagination no man can possibly invent even the pettiest object; that it is one of

the faculties which essentially raises man above the brutes, by enabling him to create for himself; that the first savage who ever made a hatchet must have imagined that hatchet to himself ere he began it; that every new article of commerce, every new opening for trade, must be arrived at by acts of imagination; by the very same faculty which the poet or the painter employs, only on a different class of objects; remember that this faculty is present in some strength in every mind of any power, in every mind which can do more than follow helplessly in the beaten track and do nothing but what it has seen others do already: and then see whether it be not worth while to give the young a study which above all others is fitted to keep this important and universal faculty in health. Now, from fifty to five-and-twenty years ago, under the influence of the Franklin and Edgeworth school of education, imagination was at a discount. That school was a good school enough: but here was one of its faults. It taught people to look on imagination as quite a useless, dangerous, unpractical, bad thing, a sort of mental disease. And now, as is usual after an unfair depreciation of any thing, has come a revolution; and an equally unfair glorifying of the imagination; the present generation have found out suddenly that the despised faculty is worth something, and therefore are ready to believe it worth everything; so that now-a-days, to judge from the praise heaped on some poets, the mere possession of imagination, however ill-regulated, will atone for every error of false taste, bad English, carelessness for truth; and even for coarseness, blasphemy, and want of common morality; and it is no longer charity, but fancy, which is to cover the multitude of sins.

The fact is, that youth will always be the period of imagination; and the business of a good education will

always be to prevent that imagination from being thrown inward, and producing a mental fever, diseasing itself and the whole character by feeding on its own fancies, its own day-dreams, its own morbid feelings, its likes and dislikes; even if it do not take at last to viler food, to French novels, and lawless thoughts, which are but too common, alas! though we will not speak of them here.

To turn the imagination not inwards, but outwards; to give it a class of objects which may excite wonder, reverence, the love of novelty and of discovering, without heating the brain or exciting the passions—this is one of the great problems of education; and I believe from experience that the study of natural history supplies in great part what we want. The earnest naturalist is pretty sure to have obtained that great need of all men, to get rid of self. He who, after the hours of business, finds himself with a mind relaxed and wearied, will not be tempted to sit at home dreaming over impossible scenes of pleasure, or to go for amusement to haunts of coarse excitement, if he have in every hedge-bank, and woodland, and running stream, in every bird among the boughs, and every cloud above his head, stores of interest which will enable him to forget awhile himself, and man, and all the cares, even all the hopes of life, and to be alone with the inexhaustible beauty and glory of Nature, and of God who made her. An hour or two every day spent after business-hours in botany, geology, entomology, at the telescope or the microscope, is so much refreshment gained for the mind for to-morrow's labour, so much rest for irritated or anxious feelings, often so much saved from frivolity or sin. And how easy this pursuit. How abundant the subjects of it! Look round you here. Within the reach of every one of you are wonders beyond all poets' dreams. Not a hedge-bank but has

its hundred species of plants, each different and each beautiful; and when you tire of them—if you ever can tire—a trip into the meadows by the Thames, with the rich vegetation of their dikes, floating flower-beds of every hue, will bring you as it were into a new world, new forms, new colours, new delight. You ask why this is? And you find yourself at once involved in questions of soil and climate, which lead you onward, step by step, into the deepest problems of geology and chemistry. In entomology, too, if you have any taste for the beauties of form and colour, any fondness for mechanical and dynamical science, the insects, even to the smallest, will supply endless food for such likings; while their instincts and their transformations, as well as the equally wondrous chemical transformation of salts and gases into living plants, which agricultural chemistry teaches you, will tempt you to echo every day Mephistopheles' magic song, when he draws wine out of the table in Auersbach's cellar:—

> Wine is grapes, and grapes are wood,—
> The wooden board yields wine as good:
> It is but a deeper glance
> Into Nature's countenance.
> All is plain to him who seeth;
> Lift the veil and look beneath,
> And behold, the wise man saith,
> Miracles, if you have faith.

Believe me you need not go so far to find more than you will ever understand. An hour's summer walk, in the company of some one who knows what to look for and how to look for it, by the side of one of those stagnant dikes in the meadows below, would furnish you with subjects for a month's investigation, in the form of plants, shells, and animalcules, on each of which a whole volume might be written. And even at this seemingly dead season of the year, fancy not that

nature is dead—not even that she sleeps awhile. Every leaf which drops from the bough, to return again into its gases and its dust, is working out chemical problems which have puzzled a Boyle and a Lavoisier, and about which a Liebig and a Faraday will now tell you that they have but some dim guess, and that they stand upon the threshold of knowledge like (as Newton said of himself) children gathering a few pebbles, upon the shore of an illimitable sea. In every woodland, too, innumerable fungi are at work, raising from the lower soil rich substances, which, strewed on the surface by quick decay, will form food for plants higher than themselves; while they, by their variety and beauty, both of form and colour, might well form studies for any painter, and by the obscure laws of their reproduction, studies for any philosopher. Why, there is not a heap of dead leaves among which by picking it through carefully you might not find some twenty species of delicate and elegant land-shells; hardly a tree-foot at which, among the moss and mould, you might not find the chrysalides of beautiful moths, where caterpillars have crawled down the trunk in autumn, to lie there self-buried and die to live again next spring in a new and fairer shape. And if you cannot reach even there, go to the water-butt in the nearest yard, and there, in one pinch of green scum, in one spoonful of water, behold a whole 'Divina Commedia' of living forms, more fantastic a thousand times than those with which Dante peopled his unseen world: and then feel, as you should feel, abashed at the ignorance and weakness of mortal man; abashed still more at that rash conceit of his, which makes him fancy himself the measure of all things; and say with me, 'Oh Lord, thy works are manifold; thy ways are very deep. In wisdom hast thou made them all, the

earth is full of thy riches. Thou openest thine hand, and fillest all things living with plenteousness; they continue this day according to thine ordinance, for all things serve thee. Thou hast made them fast for ever and ever; thou hast given them a law which shall not be broken. Let them praise the name of the Lord; for he spake the word and they were made, he commanded, and they were created.'

This I shall say, but little more than this, on the religious effect of the study of natural history. I do not wish to preach a sermon to you. I can trust God's world to bear better witness than I can, of the Loving Father who made it. I thank Him from my own experience for the testimony of His Creation, only next to the testimony of His Bible. I have watched scientific discoveries which were supposed in my boyhood to be contrary to revelation, found out one by one to confirm and explain revelation, as crude and hasty theories were corrected by more abundant facts, and men saw more clearly what both the Bible and Nature really did say; and I can trust that the same process will go on for ever, and that God's earth and God's word will never contradict each other. I have found the average of scientific men not less, but more, godly and righteous men than the average of their neighbours; and I can trust that this will be more and more the case as science deepens and widens. And therefore I can trust that every patient, truthful, and healthful mind will, the more it contemplates the works of God, re-echo St. Paul's great declaration that the Invisible things of God are clearly seen from the foundation of the world, being understood by the things which are made, even his eternal power and Godhead. And so trusting, I pass on to a lower view of the subject, and yet not an unnecessary one.

In an industrial country like this, the practical utility of any study must needs be always thrown into the scale; and natural history seems at first sight somewhat unpractical. What money will it earn for a man in after life?—is a question which will be asked; and which it is folly to despise. For if the only answer be 'None at all,' a man has a right to rejoin 'Then let me take up some pursuit which will train and refresh my mind as much as this one, and yet be of pecuniary benefit to me some day.' If you can find such a study, by all means follow it: but I say that this study too may be of great practical benefit in after life. How much money have I, young as I am, seen wasted for want of a little knowledge of botany, geology, or chemistry. How many a clever man becomes the dupe of empirics for want of a little science. How many a mine is sought for where no mine could be; or crop attempted to be grown, where no such crop could grow. How many a hidden treasure, on the other hand, do men walk over unheeding. How many a new material, how many an improved process in manufacture is possible, yet is past over, for want of a little science. And for the man who emigrates, and comes in contact with rude nature teeming with unsuspected wealth, of what incalculable advantage to have if it be but the rudiments of those sciences, which will tell him the properties, and therefore the value, of the plants, the animals, the minerals, the climates with which he meets? True—home-learnt natural history will not altogether teach him about these things, because most of them must needs be new: but it will teach him to compare and classify them as he finds them, and so by analogy with things already known to him, to discover their intrinsic worth.

For natural history stands to man's power over Nature,

that is, to his power of being useful to himself and to mankind, in the same relation as do geography, grammar, arithmetic, geometry, political economy; none of them, perhaps, bearing directly on his future business in life; but all training his mind for his business, all giving him the rudiments of laws which he will hereafter work out and apply to his profession. And even at home, be sure that such studies will bear fruit in after life. The productive wealth of England is not exhausted, doubt it not; our grandchildren may find treasures in this our noble island of which we never dreamed, even as we have found things of which our forefathers dreamed not. Recollect always that a great market town like this is not merely a commercial centre; not perhaps even a commercial centre at all: but that she is an agricultural centre, and one of the most important in England; that the increase of science here, will be sure more or less to extend itself to the neighbourhood: and then lay to heart this one fact. A friend of mine, and one whom I am proud to call my friend, succeeding to an estate, thought good to cultivate it himself. And being a man of common sense, he thought good to know something of what he was doing. And he said to himself, The soil, and the rain, and the air, are my raw materials. I ought surely then to find out what soil, and rain, and air are; so I must become a geologist and a meteorologist. Vegetable substances are what I am to make. And I ought surely to know what it is that I am making; so I must become a botanist. The raw material does somehow or other become manufactured into the produce; the soil into the vegetable. I ought surely to know a little about the processes of my own manufacture; so I must learn chemistry. Chance and blind custom are not enough for me. At best they can but leave me where they

found me, at their mercy. Science I need; and science I will acquire. What was the result? After many a mistake and disappointment, he succeeded in discovering on his own estate a mine of unsuspected wealth—not of gold indeed, but of gold's worth—the elements of human food. He discovered why some parts of his estate were fertile, while others were barren; and by applying the knowledge thus gained, he converted some of his most barren fields into his most fertile ones; he preserved again and again his crops from blight, while those of others perished all around him; he won for himself wealth, and the respect and honour of men of science; while those around him, slowly opening their eyes to his improvements, followed his lessons at second-hand, till the whole agriculture of an important district has become gradually but permanently improved, under the auspices of one patient and brave man, who knew that knowledge was power, and that only by obeying nature can man conquer her.

Bear in mind both these last great proverbs; and combine them in your mind. Remember that while England is, and ever will be, behindhand in metaphysical and scholastic science, she is the nation which above all others has conquered nature by obeying her; that as it pleased God that the author of that proverb, the father of inductive science, Bacon Lord Verulam, should have been an Englishman, so it has pleased Him that we, Lord Bacon's countrymen should improve that precious heirloom of science, inventing, producing, exporting, importing, till it seems as if the whole human race, and every land from the equator to the pole must henceforth bear the indelible impress and sign-manual of English science.

And bear in mind, as I said just now, that this study of natural history is the grammar of that very

physical science which has enabled England thus to replenish the earth and subdue it. Do you not see, then, that by following these studies you are walking in the very path to which England owes her wealth; that you are training in yourself that habit of mind which God has approved as the one which He has ordained for Englishmen, and are doing what in you lies toward carrying out, in after life, the glorious work which God seems to have laid on the English race, to replenish the earth and subdue it?

One word more, and I have done. Unless you are already tired of hearing me, I would suggest a few practical hints before we part. The best way of learning these matters is by classes, in which men may combine and interchange their thoughts and observations. The greatest savans find this; and have their Microscopic Society, Linnæan, Royal, Geological Societies, British Associations, and what not, in which all may know what each has done, and each share in the learning of all; for as iron sharpeneth iron, so a man sharpens the face of his friend. I have nothing to say against debating societies: perhaps it was my own fault that whenever I belonged to one as a young man, I found them inclined to make me conceited, dictatorial, hasty in my judgments, trying to state a case before I had investigated it, to teach others before I had taught myself, to make a fine speech, not to find out the truth; till in, I think, a wise moment for me, I vowed at twenty never to set foot in one again, and kept my vow. Be that as it may, I wish that side by side with the debating society, I could see young men joining in natural history societies; going out in company on pleasant evenings to search together after the hidden treasures of God's world, and read the great green book which lies open alike to peasant and to peer; and then meeting, say

once a week, to debate, not of opinions but of facts; to show each what they had found, to classify and explain, to learn and to wonder together. In such a class many appliances would be possible. A microscope, for instance, or chemical apparatus, might belong to the society, which each individual by himself would not be able to afford; while as for books—books on these subjects are now published at a marvellous cheapness, which puts them within the reach of every one, and of an excellence which twenty years ago was impossible. Any working man in this town might now, especially in a class, consult scientific books, for which I, as a lad, twenty years ago, was sighing in vain; nay, many of which, twenty years ago, the richest nobleman could not have purchased; for the simple reason, that, dear or cheap, they did not exist. Such classes, too, would be the easiest, cheapest, and pleasantest way of establishing what ought to exist, I think, in connexion with every institution like this, namely, a museum. If the young men were really ready and willing to collect objects of interest, I doubt not that public-spirited men would be found, who would undertake the expense of mounting them in a museum. And you cannot imagine, I assure you, how large and how interesting a museum might be formed of the natural curiosities of a neighbourhood like this, I may say, indeed, of any neighbourhood or of any parish: but your museum need not be confined to the neighbourhood. Societies now exist in every part of England, who will be happy to exchange their duplicates for yours. As your collection increased in importance, old members abroad would gladly contribute foreign curiosities to your stock. Neighbouring gentlemen would send you valuable objects which had been lumbering their houses, uncared for, because they stood alone, and formed no

part of a collection; and I, for one, would be happy to add something from the fauna and flora of those moorlands, where I have so long enjoyed the wonders of nature; never, I can honestly say, alone; because when man was not with me, I had companions in every bee, and flower, and pebble; and never idle, because I could not pass a swamp, or a tuft of heather, without finding in it a fairy tale of which I could but decipher here and there a line or two, and yet found them more interesting than all the books, save one, which were ever written upon earth.

THOUGHTS IN A GRAVEL-PIT.*

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, we may of course think of anything which we choose in a gravel-pit, as we may anywhere else. Thought is free: at least so we fancy.

But the most right sort of thought, after all, is thought about what lies nearest us; not always, but surely once in a way, that we may understand something of every-day objects. And therefore it may be well worth our while to go once into a gravel-pit, and think about it, till one has learnt what a gravel-pit is.

Learnt what a gravel-pit is? Everybody knows.

If it be so, everybody knows more than I know. We all know a gravel-pit when we see one: but we do not all know what we see. I do not know. I know a little; a few scraps of fact about these pits round here, though about no others. Were I to go into a pit a hundred miles, even fifty miles off, I could tell you nothing certain about it; perhaps might make a dozen mistakes. But what I know, with tolerable certainty, about the pits round here, I wish to tell you to-night.

But why? You do not need, one in ten of you, to know anything about gravel, unless you be highway surveyor, or have a garden walk to make; and then

* A lecture delivered at the Mechanics' Institute, Odiham, 1857.

some one will easily tell you where the best gravel is to be got, at so much a load.

Very true: but you come here to-night to instruct yourselves; that is, to learn, if you can, something more about the world you live in; something more about God who made the world.

And you come here to educate yourselves; to educe and bring out your own powers of perceiving, judging, reasoning; to improve yourselves in the art of all arts, which is, the art of learning. That is mental education.

Now if a gravel-pit will teach you a little about these things; you will surely call it a rich gravel-pit. If it helps you to wisdom, which is worth more than gold; which is the only way to get gold wisely, and spend it wisely; then we will call our pit no more a gravel-pit, but a wisdom-pit, a mine of wisdom.

Let us go out, then, in fancy (for it is too cold to go out in person) to Hook Common, scramble down into the first gravel-pit we come to, and see what we can see.

The first thing we see is a quantity of stones, more or less rounded, lying in gravel and poor clay.

Well—what do those stones tell us?

These stones, as I told you when I addressed you last, are ancient and venerable worthies. They have seen a great deal in their time. They have had a great deal of knocking about, and have stood it manfully. They have stood the knocking about of three worlds already; and have done their duty therein; and they are ready (if you choose to mend the road with them) to stand the knocking about of this fourth world, and being most excellent gravel, to do their duty in this world likewise: which is more, I fear, than either you or I can say for ourselves.

Three worlds?

Yes. Standing there in the gravel-pit, I see three old worlds, in each of which these stones played their part; and this world of man for the fourth, and the best of all—for man, if not for the stones. I speak sober truth. Let me explain it step by step.

You know the chalk-hills to the south; and the sands of Crooksbury and the Hind Head beyond them. There is one world.

You know the clays and sands of Hook and Newnham, Dogmersfield and Shapley Heath, and all the country to the north as far as Reading. There is a second world.

You know the gravel-pit itself; and all the upper soils and gravels, which are spread over the length and breadth of the country to the north. There is a third world.

Let us take them one by one.

First, the chalk.

The chalk-hills rise much higher than the surrounding country: but you must not therefore suppose that they were made after it, and laid on the top of it. That guess would be true, if you went south-east from here toward the Hind Head. The chalk lies on the top of the sands of Crooksbury Hill, and the clays of Holt Forest: but it dips underneath the sands of Shapley Heath, and the clays of Dogmersfield, and reappears from underneath them again at Reading.

Thus you at Odiham stand on the edge of a chalk basin; of what was once a sea, or estuary, with shores of chalk, which begins at the foot of the High Clere Hills, and runs eastward, widening as it goes, past London, into the Eastern Sea. Everywhere under this great basin is the floor of chalk, covered with clays and sands, which, for certain reasons, are called by geologists Tertiary strata.

But what has this to do with the gravel-pit?

This first. That all the flints in this pit have come out of the chalk. They are coloured, most of them, with iron, which has turned them brown: but they are exactly the same flints as those grey ones in the chalk-pit on the other side of the town.

How do I know that?

I think our own eyes will prove it: they are the same shapes, and of the same substance; but as a still surer proof, we find exactly the same fossils in them; sponges, choanites (which were something like our modern sea-anemones), corals, and 'shepherds' crowns' as the boys call the fossil sea-urchins. The species of all these, and of other fossils, in the chalk-pit and in the gravel-pit, are absolutely identical. The natural conclusion is, then, that the gravel has been formed from the washings of the chalk. The white lime of the chalk has been carried away in water by some flood or floods; the heavier flints have been left behind.

Stop now one moment, and think. You all know how very few flints there are in the chalk-pit, in proportion to the mass of chalk. You all know what vast gravel-beds cover the country to the north, and often to the thickness of many feet. Try and conceive, then, what a much more vast mass of chalk must have been washed away, to leave that vast mass of gravel behind it.—Conceive? It is past conception. I will but give you two hints as to its probable size.

The chalk to the eastward, between here and Farnham, is a far narrower and shallower band than anywhere else in England. Its narrowest point is, I believe, beneath the bishop's palace at Farnham, where it may be a hundred feet thick, instead of several hundred, as it usually is in other parts of England. The cause of this is, that the whole of the upper chalk has been

washed away, to form the gravel beds to the north and east of us.

Again. Some of you may have been on the Hind Head or on Leith Hill, and have looked southward over the glorious prospect of the rich Weald, spread out five hundred feet below—a sight to make an Englishman proud of his native land. Now, the mass of chalk which has been carried away began behind you, at the Hogsback, and the line of chalk-hills which runs to Boxhill, and stretched hundreds of feet above your head as you stand on Hind Head or Leith Hill, right over the old Weald of Sussex to the chalk of the South Downs. And out of the scourings of that vast mass of chalk was our gravel-pit made.

Of that, and also of the Hind Head sands below it.

For you will find a great deal of sharp sand in our gravel-pits, which has not, I believe, come from the grinding of chalk flints; for if it had been ground, it would not be the sharp sand it is; the particles would be rounded off at the edges. This is probably sand from the Hind Head; from what geologists term the green sands, below the chalk.

And I have a better proof of this—at least I should have in every gravel-pit at Eversley—in a few pieces of a stone which is not chalk-flint at all; flattish and oblong, not more than two or three inches in diameter; of a greyish colour, and a porous, worm-eaten surface, which no chalk-flint ever has. They are chert, which abound in the greensand formation; and insignificant as they look, are a great token of a most important fact; that the currents which formed our sands and gravels set from the south during a long series of ages, first till they had washed away all the chalk off the Weald, and next till they had washed away a great part of the sands which then became exposed, the re-

mains whereof form great commons over a wide tract of Surrey.

Now let me pause, and ask you to observe one thing. How, in inductive science, we arrive, by patient and simple observation of the things around us, at the most grand and surprising results. Of course I am not giving you the whole of the facts which have made this argument certain. I am only giving you enough to make it probable to you. Its certainty has been proved by many different men, labouring in many different parts of England, and of the Continent also, and then comparing their discoveries together; often, of course, making mistakes; but each working on patiently, and correcting their early mistakes by fresh facts, till they have at last got hold of the true key to the mystery, and are as certain of the existence of the great island of the Weald, and its gradual destruction by the waves and currents of an ancient sea, as if they had seen it with their bodily eyes. You must take all this, of course, as truth from me to-night: but you may go and examine for yourselves; and see how far your own common sense and observations agree with those of learned geologists.

The history of this great Wealden island to the south-east of us is obscure enough: but a few general facts, which bear upon our gravel-pit, I can give you.

I must begin, however, ages before the Wealden island existed; when the chalk of which its mass was composed was at the bottom of a deep ocean.

We know now what chalk is, and how it was made. We know that it was deposited as white lime mud, at a vast sea-depth, seemingly undisturbed by winds or currents. We know that not only the flint, but the chalk itself, is made up of shells; the shell of little microscopic animalcules smaller than a needle's point,

in millions of millions, some whole, some broken, some in powder, which lived, and died, and decayed for ages in the great chalk sea.

We know this, I say. We had suspected it long ago, and become more and more certain of it as the years went on. But now we seem to have a proof of it which is past gainsaying.

In the late survey of the bottom of the Atlantic Ocean, with a view to laying down the electric telegraph between England and America, by Lieutenant Maury of the American navy, a great discovery was made. It was found that the floor of the Atlantic Ocean, after you have left the land a few hundred miles, is one vast plain of mud, of some thirteen hundred miles in breadth. But here is the wonder; it was found that at a depth averaging 1600 fathoms—9600 feet—in utter darkness, the sea floor is covered with countless millions of animalcule-shells, of the same families, though not of the same species, as those which compose the chalk.

At the bottom of a still ocean, then, the chalk was deposited. But it took many an age to raise it to where Odiham chalk-pit now stands.

But how was it raised?

By the upheaving force of earthquakes. Or rather, by the upheaving force which causes earthquakes, when it acts in a single shock, cracking the earth's crust by an explosion; but which acts, too, slowly and quietly, uplifting day by day, and year by year, some portions of the earth's surface, and letting others sink down; as in the case of the valley of the Jordan and the Dead Sea, which is now 1300 feet below the level of the Mediterranean.

That these upheaving forces were much more violent than now, in the earlier epochs of our planet, we have

some reason to believe: but the subject is too long a one to enter on now; and all I can say is, that you must conceive for yourself the chalk gradually brought up to the surface, worn away along a shifting shore line by the waves of the sea, and covered in shallow water by the clays and sands on which Odiham stands; and which compose the earliest part of our second world.

A second world; a new world. We can use no weaker expression. When we compare the chalk with the strata which lie upon it, we can only call them a complete new creation.

For not only were they deposited in shallow water; a great deal of them, probably, near river-mouths, and by the force of violent currents, as the irregularity of their lower beds proves: but there is hardly a plant or animal found in the chalk itself, which is found in the gravels, sands, or clays above it. The shells are all new species; unseen before in this planet. The vegetables, as far as we know them, are all different from anything found in the chalk, or in the beds below it. God Almighty, for his own good pleasure, has made all things new. It is a very awful fact; but it is a very certain one. Several times, in the history of our planet, has the Lord God fulfilled the words of the Psalmist—

'Thou takest away their breath, they die, and return again to their dust.

'Thou sendest forth thy breath, they are made: and thou renewest the face of the earth.'

But in no instance, perhaps, is the gulf so vast; is the leap from one world to another so sheer, as that between the chalk and the London clay above it.

But how do I know that there was a shore line here? And how do I know that the chalk was covered with sand-beds?

I know that there was a shore line here, from this fact. If you will look at the surface of the chalk, where the sands and clays lie on it, you will find that it is not smooth; that the beds do not rest conformably on each other, as if they had been laid down quietly by successive tides, while the chalk below was still soft mud. So far from it, the chalk must have become hard rock, and have been exposed to the action of the sea waves, for centuries, perhaps, before the sands began to cover it. For you find the surface of the chalk furrowed, worn into deep pits, which are often filled with sand, and gravel, and rounded lumps of chalk. You may see this for yourselves, in the topmost layer of any chalk-pit round here. You may see, even, in some places, the holes which boring shells, such as work now close to the tide-level, have made in it; all the signs, in fact, of the chalk having been a rocky sea-beach for ages.

The first bed which you will generally find upon the water-worn surface of the chalk is a layer of green sand and green-coated flints. Among these are met with in many places beds of a great oyster, now unknown in life. I cannot say whether there are any here; but at Reading, to the east of Farnham, at Croydon, and under London, they are abundant. There must have been miles and miles of oyster-bed at the bottom of that Eocene sea; among the oyster-beds, beds of a peculiar pebble, which we shall see in our gravel-pit.

They are flints; but very small, dark, often almost black, and quite round and polished. Compare them with the average flints of the pit, and you see that while the average flints are fresh from the chalk, these have plainly been rolled and rounded for years. They are (except in their dark colour) exactly such shingle

as forms the south-coast beach about Hastings and Brighton. They are the shingle beaches of the Eocene sea, part of which are preserved under the London clay. To the north a vast bed of them remains in its original place, on Blackheath near London; while part, in the district to the south, which the London clay has not covered, have been washed away, and carried into our gravel-pit, to mingle with other flints fresh from the chalk.

I said just now that I had proof that a great track of the chalk-hills which are now bare, was once covered with sand and gravel. Here, in the presence of these dark pebbles, is a proof. But I have another, and a yet more curious one.

For our gravel-pit, if it be, will possibly yield us another, and a more curious object. You most of you have seen, I dare say, large stones, several feet long, taken out of these pits. In the gravels and sands at Pirbright they are so plentiful that they are quarried for building-stone. And good building-stone they make; being exceedingly hard, so that no weather will wear them away. They are what is called saccharine (that is, sugary) sandstone. If you chip off a bit, you find it exactly like fine whity-brown sugar, only intensely hard. Now these stones have become very famous; for two reasons. First, the old Druids used them to build their temples. Second, it is a most puzzling question where they came from.

First. They were used to build Druid temples.

If you go to the further lodge of Dogmersfield Park, which opens close to the Barley-mow Inn, you will see there several of them, about five feet high each, set up on end. They run in a line through the plantation past the lodge, along the park palings; one or two are

in an adjoining field. They are the remains of a double line; an avenue of stones, which has formed part of an ancient British temple.

I know no more than that: of that I am certain.

But if you go to the Chalk Downs of Wiltshire, you see these temples in their true grandeur. You have all heard of Stonehenge on Salisbury Plain. Some of you may have heard of the great Druid temple at Abury in Wilts, which, were it not all but destroyed, would be even grander than Stonehenge. These are made of this same sugar-sandstone.

But where did the sandstone come from? You may say, it 'grew' of itself in our sands and gravels: but it certainly did not 'grow' on the top of a bare chalk down. The Druids must have brought the stones thither, then, from neighbouring gravel-pits. They brought them, no doubt: but not from gravel-pits. The stones are found loose on the downs on the top of the bare chalk, in places where they plainly have not been put by man.

For instance, near Marlborough is a long valley in the chalk, which, for perhaps half a mile, is full of huge blocks of this sandstone, lying about on the turf. The 'grey wethers' the shepherds call them. One look at them would show you that no man's hand had put them there. They look like a river of stone, if I may so speak; as if some mighty flood had rolled them along down the valley, and there left them behind as it sunk.

Now, whence did they come?

Many answers have been given to that question. It was supposed by many learned men that they had been brought from the sandstone mountains of Wales, like the rolled pebbles of which I spoke just now.

But the answer to that was; that these great stones are not rolled: they are all squarish, more or less; their edges are often sharp and fresh, instead of being polished almost into balls, as they would have been in rolling two hundred miles along a sea-bottom, before such a tremendous current as would have been needed to carry them.

Then rose a very clever guess. They must have been carried by icebergs, as much silt and stones (we know) has been carried; and have dropped like them to the bottom, when the icebergs melted.

There is great reason in that: but we have cause now to be certain that they did not come from Wales. That they are not pieces of a rock older than the chalk, but much younger; that they were very probably formed close to where they now lie.

Now—how do we know that?

If you are not tired with all this close reasoning, I will tell you.—If you are, say so: but as I said at first, I want to show you what steady and sharp headwork this same geology requires, even in the nearest gravel-pit.

Well, then. I do not think our gravel-pit will tell us what we want: but I know one which will.

You have all heard of Lady Grenville's lovely place, Dropmore, beyond Maidenhead; where the taste of that good and great man, the late Lord Grenville, converted into a paradise of landscape-gardening art a barren common, full of clay and gravel-pits. Lord Grenville wanted stones for rock-work; in those pits he found some blocks, of the same substance as those of Stonehenge or Pirbright. And they contain the answer. The upper surface of most of them is the usual clear sugar-sandstone: but the under surface of many has round pebbles imbedded in it, looking

just like plums in a pudding; the smaller above and the larger below, as if they had sunk slowly through the fluid sand, before the whole mass froze, as it were, suddenly together. And these pebbles are nothing else than rolled chalk flints.

That settles the matter. The pebbles could not come from Wales; there are no flints there. They could not have been made before the chalk; for out of the chalk they came; and the only explanation which is left to us, I believe, is, that over the tops of the chalk downs; over our heads where we stand now; there once stretched layers of sand and gravel, 'Tertiary strata,' as I have been calling them to you; and among them layers of this same hard sandstone.

When the floods came, they must have swept away all these soft sands and gravels (possibly to make the Bagshot sands, of which I shall speak presently), and left the chalk downs bare: but while they had strength to move the finer particles, they had not generally strength to move these sandstone blocks, but let them drop through, and remain upon the freshly-bared floor of chalk, as the only relics of a tertiary land long since swept away; while some were carried off, possibly by icebergs, as far as Pirbright, and dropped, as the icebergs melted, both there, at Dogmersfield, and also, though few and small, in Eversley and the neighbourhood.

But how came these tertiary sandstones to be so very hard, while the strata round them are so soft?

Ladies and gentlemen, I know no more than you. Experience seems to say, that stone will not harden into that sugary crystalline state, save under the influence of great heat: but I do not know how the heat should have got to that layer in particular. Possibly there may have been eruptions of steam, of boil-

ing water holding silex (flint) in solution—a very rare occurrence: but something similar is still going on in the famous Geysers or boiling springs of Iceland. However, I have no proof that this was the cause. I suppose we shall find out some day how it happened; for we must never despair of finding out anything which depends on facts.

Part of the town of Odiham, and of North Warnborough, stands, I believe, upon these lower beds, which are called by geologists the Woolwich and Reading beds, and the Plastic clays, from the good brick earth which is so often found among them. But as soon as you get to Hook Common, and to Dogmersfield Park, you enter on a fresh deposit; the great bed of the London clay.

I give you a rough section, from a deep well at Dogmersfield House; from which you may see how steeply the chalk dips down here under the clay, so that Odiham stands, as it were, on the chalk beach of the clay sea.

In boring that well there were pierced—

Forty feet of the upper sands (the Bagshot sands), of which I shall speak presently.

Three hundred and thirty feet of London clay.

Then about forty feet of mottled clays and sands.

Whether the chalk was then reached, I do not know. It must have been close below. But these mottled clays and sands abound in water (being indeed the layer which supplies the great breweries in London, and those soda-water bottles on dumb-waiters which squirt in Trafalgar-square); and (I suppose) the water being reached, the boring ceased.

Now, this great bed of London clay, even more than the sands below it, deserves the title of a new creation.

As a proof—some of you may recollect, when the South-Western Railway was in making, seeing shells—some of them large and handsome ones—Nautili, taken out of the London clay cutting near Winchfield.

Nautili similar to them (but not the same) are now only found in the hottest parts of the Indian seas; and what is more, not one of those shells is the same as the shells you find in the chalk. Throughout this great bed of London clay, the shells, the remains of plants and animals, are altogether a new creation. If you look carefully at the London clay shells, you will be struck with their general likeness to fresh East Indian shells; and rightly so. They do approach our modern live shells in form, far more than any which preceded them; and indeed, a few of the London clay shells exist still in foreign seas; in the beds, again, above the clay, you will meet with still more species which are yet alive; while in the chalk, and below the chalk, you never meet, I believe, with a single recent shell. It is for this reason that the London clay is said to be Eocene, that is, the dawn of the new creation.

The chalk, I told you, seems to have been deposited at the bottom of a still and deep ocean. But the London clay, we shall find, was deposited in a comparatively shallow sea, least in depth toward High Clere on the west, and deepening toward London and the mouth of the Thames.

For not only is the clay deeper as you travel eastward, but—and this is a matter to which geologists attach great importance—the character of the shells differs in different parts of the clay.

You must know that certain sorts of shells live in deep water, and certain in shallow. You may prove this to yourselves, on a small scale, whenever you go to the seaside. You will find that the shells which crawl on the

rocks about high-water mark are different from those which you find at low-tide mark; and those again different from the shells which are brought up by the oyster-dredgers from the sea outside. Now, the lower part of the clay near here, contains shallow-water shells: but if you went forty miles to the eastward, you would find in the corresponding lower beds of the clay, deep-water shells, and far above them, shallow-water shells such as you find here: a fact which shows plainly that this end of the clay sea was shallowest, and therefore first filled up.

But again—and this is a very curious fact—between the time of the Plastic clays and sands, with their oyster-beds and black pebbles, and that of the London clay, great changes had taken place. The Plastic clays and sands were deposited during a period of earthquake, of upheaval and subsidence of ancient lands; and therefore of violent currents and flood waves, seemingly rushing down from, or round the shores of, that Wealden island to the south of us, on the shore of which island Odiham once stood. We know this from the great irregularity of the beds: while the absence of that irregularity proves to us that the London clay was deposited in a quiet sea.

But more. A great change in the climate of this country had taken place meanwhile; slowly perhaps: but still it had taken place.

In the lowest clay above the chalk, are found at Reading many leaves, and buds, and seeds of trees, showing that there was dry land near; and these trees, as far as the best botanists can guess, were trees like those we have in England now. Not of the same species, of course: but still trees belonging to a temperate climate, which had its regular warm summer and cold winter.

But before the London clay had been all de-

posited, this temperate climate had changed to a tropical one; and the plants and animals of the upper part of the London clay had begun to resemble rather those of the mouths of the African slave-rivers.

Extraordinary as this is, it is certainly true.

We know that the country near the mouth of the Thames, and probably the land round us here, was low rich soil, some half under water, some overflowed by rivers; some by fresh or brackish pools. We know all this; for we find the shells which belong to a shallow sea, mixed with fresh-water ones. We know, too, that the climate of this rich lowland was a tropical one. We know that the neighbourhood of the Isle of Sheppey, at the mouth of the Thames, was covered with rich tropic vegetation; with screw pines and acacias, canes and gourds, tenanted by opossums, bats, and vultures: that huge snakes twined themselves along the ground, tortoises dived in the pools, and crocodiles basked on the muds, while the neighbouring seas swarmed with sharks as huge and terrible as those of a West Indian shore.

It is all very wonderful, ladies and gentlemen: but so it is: and all we can say is, with the Mussulman—'God is great.'

And then—when, none knows but God—there came a time in which some convulsion of nature changed the course of the sea currents, and probably destroyed a vast tract of land between England and France, and probably also, that sunken island of Atlantis of which old Plato dreamed—the vast tract which connected for ages Ireland, Cornwall, Brittany, and Portugal. That convulsion covered up the rich clays with those barren sands and gravels, which now rise in flat and dreary steppes, on the Beacon Hill, Aldershott Moors, Hartford Bridge Flat, Frimley Ridges, and Windsor

Forest. That rich old world was all swept away, and instead of it desolation and barrenness, piling up slowly on its ruins a desert of sand and shingle, rising inch by inch out of a lifeless sea. There is something very awful to me in the barrenness of those Bagshot sands, after the rich tropic life of the London clay. Not a fossil is to be found in them for miles. Save a few shells, I believe, near Pirbright, there is not a hint that a living being inhabited that doleful sea.

But do not suppose, gentlemen and ladies, that we have yet got our gravel-pit made, or that the way-worn pebbles of which it is composed are near the end of their weary journey. Poor old stones! Driven out of their native chalk, rolled for ages on a sea-beach, they have tried to get a few centuries' sleep in the Eocene sands on the top of the chalk hills behind us, while the London clay was being deposited peacefully in the tropic sea below; and behold, they are swept out, once more, and hurled pell-mell upon the clay, two hundred feet over our heads.

Over our heads, remember. We have come now to a time when Hartford Bridge Flats stretched away to the Beacon Hill, and many a mile to the south-eastward—even down into Kent, and stretched also over Winchfield and Dogmersfield hither.

What broke them up? What furrowed out their steep side-valleys? What formed the magnificent escarpment of the Beacon Hill, or the lesser one of Finchamstead Ridges? What swept away all but a thin cap of them on the upper part of Dogmersfield Park, another under Winchfield House; another at Bearwood, and so forth?

The convulsions of a third world; more fertile in animal life than those which preceded it: but also more terrible and rapid, if possible, in its changes.

Of this third world, the one which (so to speak) immediately preceded our own, we know little yet. Its changes are so complicated that geologists have as yet hardly arranged them. But what we can see, I will sketch for you shortly.

A great continent to the south—England, probably an island at the beginning of the period, united to the continent by new beds—the Mammoth ranging up to where we now stand.

Then a period of upheaval. The German Ocean becomes dry land. The Thames, a far larger river than now, runs far eastward to join the Seine, and the Rhine, and other rivers, which altogether flow northward, in one enormous stream, toward the open sea between Scotland and Norway.

And with this, a new creation of enormous quadrupeds, as yet unknown. Countless herds of elephants pastured by the side of that mighty river, where now the Norfolk fisherman dredges their teeth and bones far out in open sea. The hippopotamus floundered in the Severn, the rhinoceros ranged over the south-western counties; enormous elks and oxen, of species now extinct, inhabited the vast fir and larch forests which stretched from Norfolk to the furthest part of Wales; hyenas and bears double the size of our modern ones, and here and there the sabre-toothed tiger, now extinct, prowled out of the caverns in the limestone hills, to seek their bulky prey.

We see, too, a period, whether the same as this, or after it, I know not yet; in which the mountains of Wales and Cumberland rose to the limits of eternal frost, and Snowdon was indeed Snowdon, an alp down whose valleys vast glaciers spread far and wide; while the reindeer of Lapland, the marmot of the Alps, and the musk ox of Hudson's Bay, fed upon alpine plants,

a few of whose descendants still survive, as tokens of the long past age of ice. And at every successive upheaval of the western mountains the displaced waters of the ocean swept over the lower lands, filling the valley of the Thames and of the Wey with vast beds of drift gravel, containing among its chalk flints, fragments of stone from every rock between here and Wales, teeth of elephants, skulls of ox and musk ox; while icebergs, breaking away from the glaciers of the Welsh Alps, sailed down over the spot where we now are, dropping their imbedded stones and silt, to confuse more utterly than before the records of a world rocking and throbbing above the shocks of the nether fire.

At last the convulsions get weak. The German Ocean becomes sea once more; the north-western Alps sink again to a level far lower even than their present one; only to rise again, but not so high as before; sea-beaches and sea-shells fill many of our lower valleys; whales by hundreds are stranded (as in the Farnham vale) where is now dry land. Gradually the sunken land begins to rise again, and falls perhaps again, and rises again after that, more and more gently each time, till as it were the panting earth, worn out with the fierce passions of her fiery youth, has sobbed herself to sleep once more, and this new world of man is made. And among it, I know not when, or by what diluvial wave out of hundreds which swept the Pleistocene earth, was deposited our little gravel-pit, from which we started on our journey through three worlds.

When?

Enough for us that He knows when, in whose hand are the times and the seasons—God the Father of the spirits of all flesh.

And now, ladies and gentlemen, take from hence a lesson. I have brought you a long and a strange road. Starting from this seemingly uninteresting pit, we have come upon the records of three older worlds, and on hints of worlds far older yet. We have come to them by no theories, no dreams of the fancy, but by plain, honest reasoning from plain, honest facts. That wonderful things had happened, we could see: but why they had happened, we saw not. When we began to ask the reason of this thing or of that, remember how we had to stop, and laying our hands upon our mouths, only say with the Mussulman, 'God is great.' We pick our steps, by lanthorn light indeed, and slowly, but still surely and safely, along a dark and difficult road: but just as we are beginning to pride ourselves on having found our way so cleverly, we come to an edge of darkness; and see before our feet a bottomless abyss, down which our feeble lanthorn will not throw its light a yard.

Such is true science. Is it a study to make men conceited and self-sufficient? Believe it not. If a scientific man, or one who calls himself so, be conceited, the conceit was there before the science; part of his natural defects: and if it stays there long, after he has really given himself to the patient study of nature, then is he one of those of whom Solomon has said, 'Though you pound a fool in a mortar among wheat with a pestle, yet will not his folly depart from him.'

For what more fit to knock the conceit out of a student, than being pounded by these same hard facts —which tell him just enough to let him know—how little he knows? What more fit to make a man patient, humble, reverent, than being stopped short, as every man of science is, after each half-dozen steps, by some tremendous riddle which he cannot explain—

which he may have to wait years to get explained—which as far as he can see will never be explained at all?

The poet says, 'An undevout astronomer is mad,' and he says truth. It is only those who know a little of nature, who fancy that they know much. I have heard a young man say, after hearing a few popular chemical lectures, and seeing a few bottle and squirt experiments, Oh water—water is only oxygen and hydrogen—as if he knew all about it. While the true chemist would smile sadly enough at the youth's hasty conceit, and say in his heart—'Well, he is a lucky fellow. If he knows all about it, it is more than I do. I don't know what oxygen is, or hydrogen either. I don't even know whether there are any such things at all. I see certain effects in my experiments which I must attribute to some cause, and I call that cause oxygen, because I must call it something; and other effects which I must attribute to another cause, and I call that hydrogen. But as for oxygen, I don't know whether it really exists. I think it very possible that it is only an effect of something else—another form of a something, which seems to make phosphorus, iodine, bromine, and certain other substances: and as for hydrogen—I know as little about it. I don't know but what all the metals, gold, silver, iron, tin, sodium, potassium, and so forth; are not different forms of hydrogen, or of something else which is the parent of hydrogen. In fact, I know but very little about the matter; except this, that I do know very little; and that the more I experiment, and the more I analyse, the more unexpected puzzles and wonders I find, and the more I expect to find till my dying day. True, I know a vast

number of facts and laws, thank God; and some very useful ones among them: but as to the ultimate and first causes of those facts and laws, I know no more than the shepherd-boy outside; and can say no more than he does, when he reads in the Psalms at school —'I, and all around me, are fearfully and wonderfully made; marvellous are thy works, and that my soul knoweth right well.'

And so, my friends, though I have seemed to talk to you of great matters this night; of the making and the destruction of world after world: yet what does all I have said come to? I have not got one step beyond what the old Psalmist learnt amid the earthquakes and volcanoes of the pastures and the forests of Palestine, three thousand years ago. I have not added to his words; I have only given you new facts to prove that he had exhausted the moral lesson of the subject, when he said:—

These all wait upon thee, that thou mayest give them their meat in due season.

Thou givest, and they gather: thou openest thy hand, and they are filled with good.

Thou hidest thy face, they are troubled; thou takest away their breath; they die and return to their dust.

Thou sendest forth thy spirit, they are created; and thou renewest the face of the earth.

But—The glory of the Lord shall endure for ever. The Lord shall rejoice in his works. Amen.

THE END.

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